

THE EXPOSITOR.



## The Staff.

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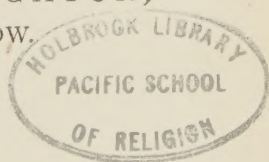
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Mr. Brown  
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## SECULARISM.

SECULARISM is, as I understand it, the system which proposes to waive all questions of man's origin and future destiny as either too speculative, or too insoluble, or both too speculative and too insoluble, for the purposes of practical life, and after giving these questions the go-by to make the best of the world we can see on principles intelligible to average understandings, without recourse to any assumptions outside the life of every day experience. So understood, secularism has a plausible air, only because it borrows a host of assumptions about every day life painfully established by centuries of spiritual discipline and supersensual teaching. Indeed secularism always reminds me of the sort of plausibility in that view of navigation which was taken by a clever skipper who objected to anything like mathematical acquirements in his mates. It set them above their work, he said, and was more likely than not to make them do the sums for finding their latitude at sea, wrong. For his part he thought it a pity that any one ever went behind the rules which every good seaman knew. You could sail a ship rightly by those rules, and you could not do any better, and might do much worse, if you pretended to go further than they took you. You knew the rules were right because they answered their purpose; and you could not find a better test of them than that, even if you cudgelled your brains till you did not know the difference between starboard and larboard. It did not occur to the skipper that unless you knew

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the reason of the rules, the Nautical Almanack, without which he could not have applied them, could not be calculated at all; nor that if the rules ever needed correction, as in the process of the ages they certainly would, no one who did not know their reason could make the correction. The case of the secularists seems to me very similar. They can get along tolerably with people of their own way of thinking so long as they assume the use of a number of rules which mere secularists never would have made and never could have made, but which they justify as the skipper justified his rules for finding the latitude, by their practical success. But it was not experience of their success which originated either set of rules, but rather was it the belief in their intellectual or moral validity which at once foresaw and guaranteed their success. Where is the secularist who will not make it the first claim for his system that he insists, more even than religious society insists, on what everybody alike values, namely, on the sacredness of the family affections, and on the simplicity and purity of home life, and that he declines to fritter away human energy on an intangible coil of scruple and vow and ideal emotion? Granted: but where did we first get the sanctions for what he values so much? How, for example, did the horror of what breaks up the family, first come into the world? Was the commandment "Thou shalt not commit adultery" the result of a long line of statesmanlike observations on the deranging effect of licentiousness on family life? Or was it the oracle of a prophet who professed to receive the law direct from above? How will the secularist deal with any member of his class who, having accepted his dictum that questions piercing into the supersensual world are insoluble and misleading, proposes to try afresh by experience the worth of the principle which asserts the holiness of marriage and the sinfulness of even transient desires which go beyond its limits? Will he not be told that just in proportion as the transcendental charac-



ter of such obligations as these has been given up, in that proportion has the law of all modern States recognized the necessity of relaxing the marriage tie? and will he not be asked why the individual conscience need be guided by a higher sense of obligation than that embodied in the law of so many lands? The sceptical party in France not long ago proposed to make marriage dissoluble at the pleasure of the parties whenever the woman had passed the age at which childbearing was no longer to be expected. Is not that, as any secularist in favour of easy divorce may well ask, a very fair indication of the effect which is naturally produced on the estimate of moral obligations of this kind, by the disappearance of all supersensual sanctions for the moral law? How is the secularist who makes it his boast that he bases his rule of life on tangible and common-sense estimates of human good to take refuge in absolute assertions of the inherent sinfulness of any course of action apart from the test of experience, since such absoluteness implies in itself the existence of a source of knowledge higher and diviner than human experience? And if he admits the test of experience as final, to what experience can he appeal as proving that the law of marriage should overrule the sway of impulse, instead of, as the French sceptics hold, the sway of impulse overruling the law of marriage?

I observe with much interest that Mr. Frederic Harrison, who is reviewing our "Creeds Old and New" from the Positivist point of view in *The Nineteenth Century*, feels keenly this weak side of humanism, as he calls secularism, though as a Positivist he is himself nothing but a humanist with a crotchet of his own, which crotchet inclines him to attribute all the evil in humanism to what he inveighs against oddly enough under the name of Protestantism. In the October number of *The Nineteenth Century* he declares that Protestantism has had only a "dividing, anti-social, dehumanizing influence." "Wherever it appears," he says,

“the power of the mother and the woman, the perpetuity of marriage, generosity towards the weak, diminish. Its triumphs are towards divorce, personal lawlessness, industrial selfishness.”

Now whether that be true or false,—which it is not my business to discuss here,—one would like to know what breakwater the Positivist has to set up against this general tendency of the negative spirit to undermine the sanctity of marriage and the purity of domestic life. And it turns out that while scornfully repudiating Protestantism, most forms of which do however oppose both an absolute Divine prohibition and also the absolute moral condemnation of the religious conscience to this form of laxity, the Positivists want to take advantage, in the name of history alone, of all those habits of mind which have been inspired by the sacramental view of marriage, though without burdening themselves in any degree with any responsibility either for the Divine origin or for the intuitive moral authority of the sacrament itself. Mr. Frederic Harrison is evidently very deeply convinced that to throw off the more powerful of the moral restrictions on human passion which the old creeds have imposed would be fatal to the progress of men; and therefore, like his master, Auguste Comte, he makes desperate efforts to borrow those theological habits of mind in the name of sociology or history, while politely disclaiming on the part of philosophy the fiction of their theological parentage. I do not think, however, that he will succeed in persuading plain Englishmen to follow his example. If the creeds which inspired the belief in the Divine authority of marriage and the Divine condemnation of an impulsive licence, are all false,—if the supersensual life in the assumption of which those creeds are rooted be all a dream,—how is history or sociology to prove that the iron chains which those creeds have placed on human passion, are not, as the humanists say, inventions of a morbid monasticism which



it becomes a civilized age to ignore, or at all events very seriously to relax?

You might just as well expect a Protestant to justify, in the name of sociology or history, the adoration of the consecrated wafer, after he had ceased to believe in the transubstantiation of the elements, as expect a humanist who had given up all faith in the Divine origin and character of the restraints placed on human desires, to accept, on grounds of pure expediency, that stern interference with some of the most vehement impulses of man which Jew and Christian alike respect because they believe it a Divine discipline intended to train our feeble natures into some faint sympathy with the constancy of God. Of course the Positivists will say that the argument in favour of a strict law of marriage is the historical evidence indicating that, without it, the continuity and purity of family life are subject to the most terrible interruptions. But the party of licence always reply—and from their point of view plausibly enough—that it is not law, but love, which secures the continuity and purity of family life; and that they never in their wildest moments proposed to interfere with the natural and purely voluntary tie which love, while it lasts, creates. Nor is it possible, I think, to justify a stern interference with the most authoritative and impetuous of human emotions, except in the name of a supersensual morality, which presents such an interference as a Divine obligation acknowledged by the inmost heart. Now for those who will admit any morality of that kind, to disbelieve in God is impossible; for an inward yoke, mysteriously imposed with absolute authority on the inmost will and the inmost desires, itself witnesses to the real existence of an authority far beyond that of finite experience, and warns us that it is for the purpose of bringing us into sympathy with the Being who wields that authority, that this yoke is imposed. Thus the whole Jewish Scriptures insist with a strange and almost

mystical monotony on the close connection between the constancy required in marriage and the constancy which God demands in the spiritual relation of worship to Himself. Sometimes there appears to be almost a confusion between sins against the one kind of fidelity, and sins against the other, as if it were implied that he who is incapable of appreciating duly the sacredness of the human tie, will be necessarily incapable of appreciating the sacredness of that which is at once more awful and more intimate. It is clear that the Jewish prophets regarded constancy in the most intimate of all human relations, as a sort of initiation into the infinite constancy of God, and held that the most genuine love of which the heart is capable depends, in human relations as in Divine, not merely nor chiefly on the warmth or impetuosity of mere impulse, but on that spirit of willing and hearty self-sacrifice which concentrates in itself all the highest elements of human nature. So far as I can follow the meaning of the prophetic teaching as concerns the close connection between licence in the relations of the sexes, and licence in regard to idolatry, it was not the licentious character of almost all the Syrian idolatry of which the prophets were chiefly thinking, but rather of the primary necessity of recognizing and adoring a purely righteous and unbending law most of all in those relations of life which stir in our hearts the most vivid and exciting emotions. Does not the evidence of the conscience shew that the most intimate relations are the most dangerous and destructive unless the profoundest obedience to the law of righteousness be carried into the very core of all these relations? that as nothing is at once more fascinating and more dissipating than close human ties which are governed by emotions alone, so also nothing is more fascinating and more dissipating than a disposition to toy with strange religions which men only half believe, to make experiments as it were on the confines of

worship, and to submit the heart to the more awful aspects of a faith which the conscience has never accepted as Divine? The most intimate relations, whether with human or super-human love, must rest on the solid basis of a righteous law, or we shall squander on them all the richest part of the life of man, and yet leave the heart a wreck.

So much for the relaxation which a purely secularist creed is certain to introduce into the main bond of the family, the bond of marriage. But now let me go beyond this point, and consider how far the increased importance which the secularist proposes to attach to the family affections generally,—for which he hopes to gain a higher cultivation when he has dismissed from his mind what he regards as an unreal spiritual world,—can be realized. Now I will make three remarks on this. Our Lord has said, “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”; and I think even the secularist would admit that if your heart is habitually fixed where there is no conviction of the existence of any lasting treasure, where there is no conviction of the existence of anything of permanent and intrinsic value, the happiness of life will not be great. If we are to attach a much higher value than at present to human affections, will it not be necessary to hope more from them than we do at present, to regard them with greater awe and greater trust, to be more sure than we have been that they will outlive youth, that they will survive care, that they will defy death? And is it possible for those who regard the question of immortality as one of the perfectly insoluble problems of human destiny to be sure *at all* on any of these points, to say nothing of being even more sure than Christians have been?

That is my first remark. And the second is this: That if our human affections are to engross for the future all the attention which, as the secularist thinks, has been superfluously lavished on the spiritual world, they must at least be bestowed with as much regard to the standard of human



righteousness as that with which the religious affections have been bestowed on the Divine standard of all righteousness. You cannot make more than ever of the human affections, and yet make less than ever of their moral ideal. You cannot lose yourself in the love of man and yet ignore his faults, his caprices, his flimsinesses, his weaknesses, his sins. Every new step in disinterested love for others implies a new step in the knowledge of what you should desire for them, what type of character they should aim at, what will gain for them more of your affection, what must inevitably cost them much of it. Now if this be so—and I think even the severest secularist will admit it—how will your new devotion to human interests behave under the moral earthquake of the discovery that all our old ideals of character are everywhere penetrated by assumptions which the secularist repudiates? We have hitherto thought it the highest praise of a man to call him godly; the secularist says it is an unmeaning phrase. We have hitherto held it a Divine command to honour our father and our mother; the secularist tells us to honour them if they merit it, but not because they are our father and mother. We have held this to be a Divine command, “Those whom God has joined together let not man put asunder.” The secularist says you must have a better reason than that, for so far as he knows God has joined none together. We have held it a Divine command not to steal. The secularist may agree on grounds of experience, but if he is a socialist as well as a secularist, he will add that society has already violated the principle, and that you must undo on a great scale the stealing of the law. We have hitherto held it a Divine command not to covet for ourselves the possessions or enjoyments of others; the secularist will probably say that he is bound to discriminate; to consider the good of society as a whole, and to desire some (even if he magnanimously resigns others) of the redundant riches and pleasures of his



fellow men. Now with such a mine as this sprung under the moral ideal we have inherited from our fathers, how is it possible to define for yourself what you are to love and what to hate, in those human beings on whom for the future you are to lavish the affections formerly given to God? Just when the heavens are all clouded over, your compass itself has failed you; you cannot steer by the sun of righteousness, for it is hidden: and you have just discovered that the variations of your moral compass are so wild and wayward that it is more than perilous to steer by that. Will the human affections grow, will they wax more constant, just as your mind begins to be most doubtful what is worthy of love and what is unworthy of it? Will you live more surely than ever in the life of beneficence when you have just discovered that the old conceptions of beneficence are all vitiated by their theological foundation, and that you must start anew with your ideal of man, for the very reason that you have surrendered your belief in God?

And my third remark on the secularist ideal is this: That it must tend rather to weaken the personal affections by substituting the benevolent end of life, *i.e.* the object of adding generally to the gross total of human happiness, for the more individual cultivation of close personal ties. My reason is this: so long as we suppose our moral law to come from God and to lead us to God, we necessarily think of life as the mere instrument by which that type of character which we regard as the most holy character, is formed: we regard a holy character as the best issue of life, instead of regarding the degree in which it tends to the happiness of life, as the best test of character. And of course all our modes of thought are moulded by this belief. We regard no life as a failure, however little it has had of happiness, however little it has bestowed of happiness, which ends in a pure, devout, self-forgetful character; indeed we regard it as the best success. But how can the secularist adopt this view? He thinks the

origin of our moral instincts as much a problem as the end of them. He thinks it as probable as not that what seem to us our highest moral conceptions, are all astray. He thinks that there is no certainty of any character surviving death, and he is precluded therefore from attaching any value to the unseen future of a mind beyond the grave. With such views he is compelled to look for a standard of action independent of our present conscience, and independent of what we can hope for from an unseen life. But there is nothing to lay hold of, entirely independent of these two religious ideas, except the visible or ascertainable happiness of visible and existing societies of men. And this is found to be actually the standard to which secularists appeal. Professor Clifford, for instance, defined right and wrong as that which tends to increase or to diminish the coherence and stability of human society. In other words, a righteous character is the means of which the perfect organisation of human societies is the end. Nor do I remember any instance of a purely secularist view of life which does not deduce its standard of right and wrong from the supposed tendency of certain conduct to increase the sum total of verifiable human happiness, and of certain other conduct to diminish it. But if this be so, what is the necessary effect? It must be, I think, to diminish incalculably the sacredness of the individual and personal, to the advantage I suppose of the general and impersonal, affections. If the individual is to be regarded as the mere constituent atom of society, as not surviving his place in that society, and as finding his perfection only in ministering to the well-being of that society, it is idle, nay it is wrong, to lavish on an individual for his own sake that sort of affection which is only justifiable so far as it tends to the good of the whole. Thus the doubt as to individual immortality, and the doubt as to any final and absolute standard of individual morality, both tend most powerfully to the very same result, the weakening

of individual affections, and the aggrandizement of general social qualities at the expense of more exclusive personal ties.

I infer then that secularism, so far from concentrating on the family affections the power which it supposes to be now wasted on an imaginary spiritual world, would sap the intensity of those family affections in three more or less distinct, though closely connected, ways. It would weaken the *value* of personal affections by discouraging all confidence as to their durability, to say nothing of their eternity. It would confuse the standard of what is lovely and unlovely, which is essential to the clearness and intensity of personal love, by throwing doubts on half the accepted types of human virtue. And, finally, it would directly depreciate them by making it clear that the love to individuals should be wholly subordinated to the love of society; that it is the end of character and conduct to cement society, not the end of society to ennoble character and conduct.

The truth is that to a very great extent it is only Christianity which makes modern secularism look plausible. By long dwelling on the Christian type of character men have learnt to imagine that that type of character could stand alone, after all the beliefs which nourished and support it are gone. "Get rid," says secularism, "of this mystical religion of yours, and we accept your morality for its own sake with all our hearts. It is only your religion which prevents you from insisting as you ought to do on your morality." On the contrary, we reply, only get rid of what you call our mystical religion, and we do not believe that enough of the old morality would survive it to make your moral position in the least like that which you at present expect to hold. Sweep away the belief in the guidance of men by a Divine hand, and all the more mysterious and less commonplace of our moral intuitions will vanish into doubtful superstitions. Dispel the belief in a future life, and that

intensity of personal affection which we now revere, will become a folly. Convince yourselves that there is no law of God, and the law of human virtue will become suddenly questionable and hazy. Once assure yourselves that a holy character is not the end of life, and you will waver more and more as to what kind of life it is that should be the end of character. Secularism is strong and respectable only while it borrows its moral standard from the Gospels, even though it declines to acknowledge the assumptions on which the Gospels found it. Let this moral stem be only separated from its root, and half the moral virtues would seem first questionable and then absurd. Why should we value human constancy if there is no eternal constancy to adore, and the law of all human emotion is change? Why should we be reverent if the origin of all our life is in the earth below, and not in the God above? Why should we be courageous, calm, and trustful, if there be no Divine shield over us, and no Divine goal to which we can attain? Why should we be lowly in heart if there is no Being higher than ourselves? If secularism is justified, it disposes not only of the received religion but of the received morality as well. And yet it founds all its claims on the increased emphasis which it would give to our morality at the expense of our religion.

R. H. HUTTON.

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### THE TETRAGRAMMATON.

#### EXODUS iii. 14.

It has often been observed that the great epochs in the history of the chosen and priestly race were marked, if not ushered in, by the introduction of a new name for God, a new verbal sign, or symbol, expressing some significant and momentous aspect of the Divine character. To the world's grey fathers, the men before the flood, He was mainly

known as *EL*, "the Strong One," or even as *Elohim*, "the Strong Ones." To the Hebrew patriarchs He made Himself known as *El-Shaddai*, "God Almighty," or even, with a tender lingering accent of affection, as "the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." But now that, for the ultimate and greater good of the world at large, He is about to raise their descendants from an idolatrous horde of slaves into a free, strong, and united nation, a race of exceptional privileges and exceptional gifts, He unveils a new and appropriate aspect of his character in the new Name which He discloses to Moses, in order that Moses, in his turn, may disclose it to the people. Slowly, but surely, this new Name, this new conception of God won its way to the very heart of the Hebrew race, transforming their own personal names even, changing Hoshea into Jehoshua for instance; giving form to their very Scriptures, hence the Elohistic and Jehovistic controversy; and gathering round it a more awful reverence as the years went by, until, at last, it was held a sin to pronounce it, nay, until the true pronunciation of this sacred Tetragrammaton, or four-lettered Name, was irrecoverably lost. *We* pronounce it *Jehovah*; but all the vowel sounds of that pronunciation are known to be wrong; and whether we ought to say *Jah*, *Jahve*, or *Iabe*, etc., is still, and is long likely to be, a moot point with scholars and divines.

But though, and perhaps because, this Name is so expressive and significant, though it was "given" with so much pomp and circumstance, though it was obviously intended to usher in a new era and to be at once the keenest incentive and an unfailing support to the Hebrew slaves in their bitter Egyptian bondage and in their struggle for enfranchisement and escape, most readers of the Bible have, I suppose, but a faint and hazy conception of what it signifies and conveys; and would be hard put to it for a reply were they asked to explain what there was in it to inspire an enslaved and



degraded race with faith, courage, hope, and to set it on striking a blow for freedom. I doubt whether most students and scholars are better off. For if, bent on discovering what there was in this sacred Name to work so great a miracle, we betake ourselves to books, even to the most learned and approved commentaries, we shall find they have but little help to give. Disquisitions on the derivation and pronunciation of the word may, indeed, be found here and there; but the point of main and profoundest interest, viz. the contents and inspiration of the Tetragrammaton, has, so far as my reading goes, been strangely overlooked. I know of no book, no essay, no discourse even, in which the moral and impelling force of the Name is discussed; in which any serious attempt is made to bring out the significance with which all admit it to be fraught; or to shew what there was in it to move the Hebrew bondsmen to rebel against the tyranny they had borne so long or to inspire and sustain them in the struggle. Probably it is the very gravity and difficulty of the theme which has held wise and good men back from any attempt to master and expound it. Possibly it is impossible to form any clear, as it is certainly impossible to form any adequate, conception of the Name which of old wrought wonders in Israel, and which has long since enshrined itself in the heart of the whole civilized world. At the same time it is terribly disappointing and disheartening to hear so much of the infinite significance and momentous importance of the Name; and yet when we ask "What did it signify then?" or "What gave it so strange and marvellous a force?" to be put off with a few general remarks, or at best with a disquisition on the verbal origin or the verbal qualities of the word. As, moreover, we must attach *some* conceptions to any word, or name, in constant use, it is obviously important that our conception of this most sacred and significant Name should be as little inadequate as we can make it; and that we should do our best to get at least

some glimpse, if more be not allowed us, of the power and influence ascribed to it, of the way in which it told on the enterprise to which first Moses, and then Israel, were summoned by God. Such glimpses and hints are not beyond our reach if we approach this Name, as Moses approached the bush from which it first sounded forth, with reverent, thoughtful, and inquiring hearts. Only we shall need to remember that we are dealing with a word which carries infinity in it and eternity, and must not hope therefore to sound its depths; we must remember that we have to approach it without the usual aids and guides, and cannot hope therefore to do more than gather up a few suggestions which may help to define our thoughts, and then serve perhaps to lead others into a larger and fuller apprehension of a word so familiar and yet so strange.

1. Now the very first thought that looks out upon us as we ask what this sacred Tetragrammaton means and implies, is, *the unity* of God. Whatever else and more the Ruler and Friend of Israel meant by calling Himself "I AM," He evidently meant that the God who ruled the universe was *one*, and not many.

In the morning of the world, and when the great primitive tradition was beginning to die out of the minds of men, it was not unnatural that they should deify every province and aspect of nature, that they should see a divinity (god or goddess) in every exhibition of more than human power, and in every revelation of more than mortal beauty. Nor, to an early and childlike piety, was it unnatural to infer that, since every tribe or race of men had separate and sometimes opposed interests, every race, every clan, if not every conspicuous family, had its tutelary deity, some divine patron, to espouse its cause and to assert its interests. As yet, the children of Israel had hardly questioned this common and prevalent superstition. Their own familiar name for God (*Elohim*), indeed, was itself a plural noun, and spoke of

“ Strong Ones ” who might, or might not, be presided over by an almighty Lord. Nor had they scrupled to apply this name to the gods of the heathen, or even to men who commanded their reverence and awe, or to the grander or more lovely features of the physical world. Nay, in “ the house of bondage,” they had even stooped to worship the innumerable gods of Egypt, the celestial patrons of their detested oppressors and lords.

The hour had struck in which they were to be saved from their idolatry, and saved in the noblest way. The “ *I am* ” of God was equivalent to “ *I alone am ; I only have life in Myself : all power, in heaven and on earth, is derived from Me.* ” This of itself was a wonderful, a most necessary and stimulating, revelation to men who were beginning to feel that the life of a people ran out beyond itself and blended with the life and fate of other races. Of what avail could *their* God be to them unless He was also the God of the Egyptian race, of the races that held the wilderness through which they had to pass, and of the races now inhabiting the goodly land which they were to possess ? unless He could break the power of Egypt, control the tribes of the desert, and subdue before them the fierce and hostile clans who had seized on the land once promised to their fathers and now promised to them ?

Such a God *Jehovah*, the Only One, now proclaimed Himself to be. In his new name there lay a claim to solitary, unshared, universal, power and dominion. And the words and acts which accompanied and followed this claim at once illustrated and confirmed it ; for they shewed Him to be a God just as bent on making the Egyptians do right by their slaves as on delivering the Hebrews from their bondage, willing to wait, willing to teach, willing to work marvels, if thus the Egyptians might be led to adopt his pure and kindly will ; but also able to break their wills and force them to let his people go, if they obstinately re-



fused to do justice and to shew mercy and to walk humbly with Him.

And who does not see what an incentive to action, to courage, to hope there lay in this revelation of God, as the sole Ruler of the world and of men, to as many of the Hebrews as were able to receive it, these receptive and wiser Hebrews being of course the leaders and guides of their fellows? What had they to fear from Pharaoh, or from his gods and magicians, what had they to fear in the pathless wilderness even, or in the Promised Land, if their God was the ruler of all lands and all races, if there was none in heaven or on earth who could dispute his authority or withstand his will?

2. Another conception suggested by this new Divine Name is the *self-subsistence* of God. Even when they worshipped and served gods many and lords many, men had not wholly lost their sense of the Divine unity. Lost to their practical lives, lost altogether perhaps to the vast majority of the race, it still lived in the thoughts and speculations of the wise. While worshipping and seeking to propitiate a whole hierarchy of divinities, they dimly conceived of an inevitable Necessity, or of a dark inscrutable Fate, to which gods and men were alike compelled to bow. Even this dark and formless conception was not without its value so long as men worshipped many lords, since it bore emphatic, though a perverted, testimony to the great truth that the whole universe is governed by one will, by one law, a truth capable of penetrating, and which we know did reach the more apprehensive minds of the time, through the idolatrous superstitions which enshrouded it.

But now that the unity of God was revealed, now that sentence was pronounced, though not as yet executed, on the whole pantheon of divinities, this dark shadow also disappeared before the incoming light, the steadfast and growing lustre of this new Divine Name. Men were taught.

what indeed it took them long to learn, that behind the throne of Him who *is*, is *always*, and *alone* is, there lurked no dark fate, no inexorable necessity, to which even He Himself had to submit. They were taught that his benign and gracious will, which will is the salvation of all men from every form of wrong and from all the miseries it breeds, is the only necessity, the only fate; that there is absolutely nothing behind, or beyond, or above Him; that those who fear Him have nothing else to fear. And this, again, could not fail to be an immense consolation, a very fountain of inspiration and strength, to men who were trembling under the despotism of their earthly rulers, and who feared that they had no helper even in heaven itself.

3. A third suggestion of this new Name, and probably its chief and ruling suggestion, is *the eternity* of God. For this name "*I Am*" means "*I am He who is*"; or, more fully, "*I am He who was, and is, and is to come.*" Jehovah is He who always *is*, whose rule had no beginning and will have no end; He who at any conceivable point, whether in the line of time or in the circle of eternity, can say "*I am.*" Hence, in the French Bible the word is translated instead of transferred; and where we read the Hebrew word "*Jehovah,*" they consistently read "*the Eternal.*"

Now in *this* suggestion of the new Divine Name there was, when once it was duly weighed, an immense significance, a most stimulating incentive to the Hebrew slaves. He who could name himself Jehovah was not, and could not be, the mere representative of a celestial dynasty which, seated for a while upon the throne of heaven, might die or pass away, like that of Osiris, or that of Saturn, Chronos, or Zeus, fleeing before the onset of more youthful and vigorous deities, or trembling under the assault of mutinous giants, or compelled to admit to their ranks and share their power with the spirits of gifted and heroic men, or even starving through the base neglect of the base multitude so soon as the multitude had

grown weary of heaping sacrifices on their altars. Such accidents and vicissitudes did befall the heathen deities on the shewing of their own priests and votaries. But *Jehovah* sat high above all the accidents of time and fortune. He *was* : always had been, always would be, though the heavens should fall or the earth be burned up, though the changeful hearts of men should turn away from Him and their hands should bring Him no gifts. In heaven, on earth, there was none to compare, none to vie with Him, and never would be. His throne would never be vacant, his purposes never broken off. And hence none who put their trust in Him could possibly fail in any enterprise to which they were summoned by Him, however great it might be, however perilous it might seem. Neither Moses nor Israel need fear that his eye would grow heavy that it could not see, or his arm be shortened that it could not save. What wonder, then, if the new Name, if this new thought of God, shone like a light, and burned like a fire in the hearts of the leaders of Israel, guiding and impelling them to the most lofty and heroic endeavours?

4. The eternity of God implies his *unchangeableness*,—a most precious, consolatory, and propelling thought both to the Israelites and to us. Had God been simply a Strong One to them, or even a Company of Strong Ones, they might well have feared to commit themselves to Him, and to the enterprise to which He summoned them. For strength is not an absolute security against change, change of purpose, of aim, of will. The gods of the heathen were believed to be mighty; but none the less they were also believed to change their aspect and intention, to frown on those on whom they had once smiled, to smite and destroy those on whom they had bestowed their favour, to fight against causes they had formerly espoused. To the Hebrews therefore, who were called to risk their very existence at the bidding of a God whom *they* hardly knew, though their “fathers”

had known and trusted Him, what comfort and inspiration would there be in the words, "I am Jehovah; I change not"!

And we, *we* change, if He does not; and often, when we change our attitude towards Him, when we fail in the service and the loyalty we owe to Him, we suspect that He too has changed, that He no longer cares for us, that He will no longer save us. Hence we also need to learn and lay to heart the meaning of his Name; to learn that his purpose for us does not change, even when his attitude changes that it may correspond with ours; that his love does not alter where it alteration finds; that the calling and gifts of God are without any afterthrob of repentance; that his purpose standeth fast because He cannot deny Himself; and that the very punishments which wait on our sins are proofs that He will save us despite our sins, since they are designed to bring us back to Him. All of which is implied in the name *Jehovah*; for He who can say "*I am*," to whom there is no before and after, who sees the end in the beginning and from the beginning: what room or scope is there for change in Him? In answer to all our doubts whether He is, or is a Rewarder of them that trust in Him, a Saviour of all who seek Him, (whether these doubts spring from an intellect which strives to comprehend the incomprehensible, or whether they are bred by our painful experience of a providence which seems adverse to us,) He simply replies, "*I am*." Behind all our changes of creed, all the various forms in which we conceive and misconceive Him, there stands this gracious and Divine Reality, the "*I Am*" whom we can never adequately conceive, and who remains untouched by our poor thoughts of Him. In revealing Himself to us by this most sacred and significant Name, it is as though He said: "Let men think of Me as they will, *I am*. Let them doubt and deny Me as they will, *I am*; and they will find Me out in time, and learn to put

their trust in Me, and let Me save them from their errors and sins and fears."

5. And so we reach still another suggestion of this Divine Name, viz. *the mystery* of God. Even when He reveals Himself to us, He hides Himself from us, answering us out of the darkness, if not out of the tempest. Even when He attempts to define Himself in words that we can grasp, He can but say "I am *that which I am*"; so much is there in Him which our finite powers cannot comprehend. Dean Stanley indeed affirms, a little rhetorically, that the giving of this Name was "the rending asunder of the veil which overhung the temple of the Egyptian Isis: 'I am that which has been, and is, and which is to be; and my veil no mortal hath drawn aside.'"<sup>1</sup> But, in sober earnest, that veil was *not* drawn aside, much less rent asunder, even when this Name was given. Jehovah simply proclaimed Himself to be "He who was, and who is, and who is to be." And though, in assuming this designation, He suggests enough of Himself, as we have seen, to inspire faith and courage, nevertheless, in telling us only that He is *what He is*, He enfolds Himself in a veil we cannot penetrate, and reminds us that even He Himself cannot tell us *what* He is. When all is said that can be said, all that even He Himself can say, the half has not been told: for how should the finite word express, or the finite intellect comprehend, the Infinite?

When therefore we demand a logical solution of the ultimate mystery of the universe, we demand that which God cannot give, simply because we cannot take it, so long as our reason works under its present limitation and our spirits are entangled in this mortal coil. When we ask to know Him even as also we are known by Him, we ask, moreover, more than it would be good for us to have while our moral nature still needs the very training which only the ventures and enterprises of a reverent and affectionate trust in Him can supply.



To know God is one thing; to know all about God, all He is and does, all He knows of Himself and of his own methods and ends, is another thing; although a thing which in our impatience, and for lack of reverence and modesty, we are constantly demanding or attempting. And, happily, we *may* know God, so know as to trust, love, and obey Him, without knowing all that He is, or being able to comprehend the full and final intention of his way with us. We may know Him on precisely the same terms on which we know anything in the universe around us, or of our fellow men. We do know much of the natural world, so much that we never doubt its existence; so much that we can obey its laws, and use its gifts, and bind its forces to our service, although every single item in the whole range of our knowledge floats unsteadily on a sea of mystery we cannot fathom. And we know much of man, or of some men, although we admit that we do not know even the man we know best, altogether, and as he is in himself. While we confess that in the being and history of our nearest neighbours there are profound mysteries which we shall never solve, we nevertheless know that they *are*; and there are, at least, some of them whom we can reasonably honour and trust and love. As we know *them*, so also we may know God, know that He *is*, know that He reveals Himself to those who seek Him, know that He is worthy of our reverence, our confidence, our supreme affection. The mystery which shrouds Him from us need not hide Him from us any more than the mysteries of our own being need hide us from ourselves, or our incapacity to comprehend all that is in man need hinder us from committing ourselves to those who have shewn themselves to be worthy of our confidence and love.<sup>1</sup>

The mystery of man, so far from disproving his existence,

<sup>1</sup> In this paragraph I have ventured to quote from myself. See "Commentary on Job," page 526 *et seq.*

or rendering us doubtful of it, only proves the greatness of man and the limitation of our own powers. Why then should the mystery of God repel us, or make us doubt whether *He* is who alone can say "I am," in the full meaning of the words? Why should it not prove *his* greatness to us, and impel us to confess that, if *He is*, *He* must be too great for us to comprehend?

6. In the words, "Say I AM *hath sent me* unto you," we have an indication of *the kindness and pity* of God. That He should have been touched to the very heart by the affliction of the Hebrew bondsmen was much; that He should have sent any man to save them from their affliction and bondage was more. But that He should have sent *Moses* to them, a man of the most heroic mould; a man of such superb and splendid beauty that the tradition of his godlike face and person lived for two thousand years after he was dead, and is as much insisted on in the New Testament as in the Old;<sup>1</sup> a man who was familiarly known as "the son of Pharaoh's daughter," and who had mastered all the secret wisdom of the very home of wisdom; a man in whom the keen insight of faith rose to inspiration, and who ever walked as seeing Him that is invisible: what mercy, what grace, was here! That *this* man, despising the treasures of Egypt and not fearing the wrath of the king, should come to them, and come with a commission from Jehovah, the sole, self-subsistent, eternal, unchangeable Lord of heaven and earth, whose ways are past finding out; and that he should come to redeem them from bondage, to guide them through the pathless wilderness, to train them into a wise, united, and holy nation, to settle them in a land flowing with milk and honey: was not this of itself a revelation of the Divine love and pity which might well rouse and animate their hearts for the noble but perilous enterprise to which they were called?

<sup>1</sup> See Acts vii. 20, and Heb. xi. 23.

As they thought of it and talked of it, must not their hearts have burned within them? And as *we* think of it, ought not our hearts to burn within us? Ought we not to lift them up, aflame with love and courage and gratitude, to that just God and Saviour who has taken pity on us; who has sent One greater than Moses to redeem us from *our* bondage, to guide us along the troubled and difficult path of life, and to bring us, when once He has trained us for glory, honour, and immortality, to a better country, even a heavenly, to a city whose builder and maker is God, to a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens? All *our* thoughts of God, start where they may, fly with what wing they will, centre in Christ Jesus, in whom abides all the fulness of God humanly, and in whom we are made one with God and with each other.

It is not enough for us, therefore, to learn what there was in the new Name by which God revealed Himself to Israel, to lift them to the height of their great enterprise; although I trust we have, in some measure, entered into its moral significance and impelling force. The one satisfactory result of our meditation can be only this; that, even though the great I AM should still be wrapt in clouds we cannot penetrate, we turn with heartfelt love and praise to the Divine Man, in whom as in a glass we may behold all the glory of the Lord; that, loving and serving Him with all our hearts, we may be changed into his image by his Spirit that dwelleth in us.

S. Cox.



## CHRIST AND THE ANGELS.

## HEBREWS I.

THE Epistle to the Hebrews contains a threefold argument to shew the superiority of Christianity over the Old Dispensation, inasmuch as Christ is superior, (1) to the Angels, (2) to Moses, (3) to the Levitical priesthood. The first of these arguments occupies the first two Chapters of the Epistle, and will form the subject of the present series of papers.

Chapter i. Verses 1-4 form the general introduction to the Epistle, passing at Verse 4 to the special contrast between Christ and the Angels. The general sense of them may be thus paraphrased:—

*After giving many partial revelations of Himself to the fathers in various ways by the prophets of old, God hath at the end of "these days" spoken to us by one who is his Son; whom He constituted heir of all things; by whom also He made the worlds: who, being the effulgence of his glory and the exact image or impress of his essential Being, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when He had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; becoming in this act as much superior to the angels as the name which He inherits is more distinguished than theirs.*

In one or two points the Authorized Version has either missed a grammatical distinction, or followed a false reading of the Greek Text. To the former head belong, in Verse 1, *God who spake* instead of *having spoken* scil. *of old: at sundry times* instead of *in many parts, in many utterances of an incomplete kind*. In Verse 2, the reading *in these last days* is false. The Septuagint renders the same Hebrew phrase sometimes *in the last days*, sometimes *at the end of the days*. The Apostle selects the second form, and makes it more precise by the insertion of *these*, in accordance with the Jewish distinction between *this world* (hā'ôlām hazzèh) and the

*world to come* (hā'ôlām habbâ). The sense therefore is that Christ has appeared at the close of the course of the present world. So Chapter ix. 26; "he hath appeared *at the close of the worlds.*" The present physical world is mutable and must perish (Chap. i. 10-12). Those things which have been made are moveable and pass away (Chap. xii. 27). Only God's kingdom which cannot be moved (Chap. xii. 28), the "future city" of the world to come, is eternal (Chap. xiii. 14). The close of this mutable course of things is betokened by the appearance of Christ, and accomplished in the second coming which the Apostle looks on as near (Chap. x. 37), and even as visibly approaching (Chap. x. 25). But the right of the Apostle to speak of the old world as practically at an end with the manifestation of Christ does not depend on the length of time still to elapse before the second coming. The powers of the world to come are already active in Christendom (Chap. vi. 5). And so what Chapter viii. Verse 13 says of the old and new Dispensations is plainly applicable here also. Where the new is already introduced, the old must be viewed as worn out and visibly approaching its end, even though to the eye of sense it has still thousands of years to run. From the last clause but one of Verse 3 in the Authorized Version omit *by himself* and *our*.

What is the conception of Christ's person here set forth? What these Verses say of Him has plainly a twofold connection—metaphysical and historical; and it has been found to be not quite easy to separate what is metaphysical, that is, what belongs to Christ already in his preexistence, from what pertains to Him only as historically manifested and glorified.

Two points are quite clear :

1. He attains his position of superiority to the angels in taking his seat at the right hand of God. This appears from the tenses (aorist with aorist participle), but also from Verse 6, where it is at his second coming that the angels worship Him; and from the contrast with the temporary subordination of Jesus to the angels which we shall find drawn out in Chapter ii. In this connection it is plain that the adjective *κρείττων* (Authorized Version *better*) is used

not of natural but of official superiority. (Chap. vii. 7.) Our Lord in his exaltation is invested with a dignity superior to that of the angels, and corresponding to the superior dignity of the name of Son. Again, superiority of dignity and function, so far as it falls within the cognisance of the Christian thinker, must have relation to the government of mankind and the plan of salvation. The Apostle's point is that, simultaneously with his exaltation, Jesus assumes a place in the order and hierarchy of salvation superior to that of the angels. The practical importance as well as the demonstration of this thesis will appear by and by.

2. On the other hand Christ's *Sonship* does not date from his exaltation. It was as *Son* that He suffered and spake on earth (Chaps. v. 8, i. 2). But, again, He was *Son* even as preexistent. It was through the Son that God created the worlds; for it is arbitrary to say, with Hofmann, that God hath spoken to us by a son and heir who, even before He became a son at his incarnation, existed and was God's instrument in creation. And it is not said that He inherited the name of Son at his exaltation, but only that He received an exaltation conformable to the superiority of the name which He inherits. The Sonship is doubtless as eternal as his person (Chap. vii. 3).

Which now of the other predicates of the Son in this passage belong to his eternal preexistence, and which only to his historical exaltation? It is a description of the eternal nature of the Son to say that He is the effulgence or bright radiance of the Father's glory, and the impress, the facsimile of his hypostatic being. The figure is closely parallel to the language of the Alexandrian Book of Wisdom (Chap. vii. 25 seqq.) in speaking of the Divine Wisdom. But that Wisdom is an impersonal principle which, "being one, is all powerful; and, remaining ever in itself, renews all things; and, entering into holy souls from generation to generation, produces friends of God and prophets."

Here, on the contrary, we have a personal "light of light," a Son who is the image of the invisible God (Col. i. 15). The Apostle gives no formal doctrine of eternal generation; and the same expressions of effulgence and impress are applied by Philo to the soul of man on the ground of Genesis i. 26, ii. 7; yet certainly the idea of a bright radiance streaming forth from God's glory points in the direction of the doctrine of an eternal generation; of a generation, that is, not before time but in the eternal now. The same idea of the eternal now is found by Philo in Psalm ii. 7, and was probably in the Apostle's mind in Verse 5. Once more, it is true of the Son, apart from the incarnation, that his mighty word upholds all things. Not only the creation, but the continuance, of the world is his work. The almighty word, or productive energy of Deity, operates only through Him, is his word in the upholding as well as in the creation of the universe (Col. i. 17).

But now comes a question much vexed by interpreters. When was the Son constituted heir of all things? Is this coincident with his exaltation? or does universal heirship belong to the Son from all eternity? The real point involved in this tangled question may be better put in another way. Is the universal heirship of Christ a metaphysical prerogative? or is it dispensational, having a relation to his work of redemption? The latter seems the correct view. It is impossible to separate the universal heirship and dominion of the Son from his sitting at the right hand of the heavenly Majesty, which is the seat of dominion (Chaps. i. 13, x. 12, 13, xii. 2). Again, in the Gospel, the heirship of the Son, as set forth in the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, is plainly dispensational, Lordship over the vineyard of God, which is a familiar Old Testament image for Israel. So, too, in Romans viii. 17 the heirship of Christ is associated with the

heirship of believers. There is no sufficient ground for dividing the thought of our Apostle from these analogies; and the expression "heir of all things" is not inconsistent with the dispensational reference; for in Ephesians i. 20-22 it appears, in like manner, as a prerogative of Christ's resurrection glory at the right hand of God, that He is head over all things to the church.

And now comes the last question: What is conferred on Christ at his exaltation which He had not before? The old fathers say that what He always possessed in his Divine nature is now conferred on his human nature also. But of this there is no trace in the text. Rather the essential place of the Son, the Logos, in relation to the works of God's omnipotence, is not identical with the place of the Son as the head of the moral creation. He becomes superior to the angels when He assumes a dispensational relation to man—and, through man, the head of creation, a relation to the whole universe—superseding them. There is nothing added to the intrinsic superiority of his being; but He occupies towards us a position as God's vicegerent higher than the angels ever held. The whole argument turns not on personal dignity, but on dignity of function in the administration of the economy of salvation.

The thesis of Verse 4 is the starting point of Chapter ii. The intervening Verses consist of argument and illustration drawn from the Old Testament, to confirm what has been already said. Observe in these Verses what is taken for granted, and what is supposed to require arguing out.

No words are wasted in proving that Christ is spoken of, not only in Psalm ii. (cited in Verse 5) and Psalm xlv. (cited in Verses 8, 9), but also in the passages cited in Verse 6 and Verses 10-12. The original of Verse 6 is not Psalm xcvii. 7, where there is no *καὶ*, but the Septuagint of Deuteronomy xxxii. 43. The passage speaks of the great judgment in which God avenges his people, and other words from it are



quoted by our writer in speaking of God's judgment at Chapter x. Verse 30. Now, that all judgment is committed to the Son was the express teaching of Jesus; and so our author has no difficulty in assuming that his readers will follow him in taking the theophany of Deuteronomy to mean the second appearing of Christ (Chap. ix. 28), when God "again introduces the firstborn into the world of man."<sup>1</sup> Clearly too it is assumed that the title *firstborn* will occasion no difficulty. The use of this expression for the Messiah comes from Psalm lxxxix. 27, where the context refers to the unending duration and supremacy of the kingdom of God's anointed One, the very ideas which are in our author's mind and which he develops in the subsequent citations from Psalms xlv., cii.

The citation from Psalm cii. is again assumed to be without dispute Messianic (Verses 10-12). This can only be done in virtue of the doctrine that creation is the work of the preexistent Christ; so that we must conclude this doctrine to have been already familiar to the readers addressed, as we find it expressly taught by Paul (1 Cor. viii. 6; Col. i. 16). It was in fact a doctrine which would find the more ready assent because Jewish theology, attaching itself to Old Testament ideas, had already in part anticipated it. What is said of the preexistent Wisdom in Proverbs viii. was developed in the Alexandrian schools, and influenced Philo's doctrine of the Logos as the eldest Son of God, the organ of creation. But among the Jews in general the preexistent Wisdom is rather the Law created before the creation of the world; and it is very possible that Paul derived the figure of the law as a "pedagogue" from the Jewish exegesis which in Proverbs viii. 30 borrows this Greek word as the rendering of *amôn* (A.V. *one brought up with him*). The doctrine of the preexistent Messiah in

<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of the Messiah as judge was known to Jewish theology. He judges the angels (B. Enoch iv. 4, lxi. 8) and men (Fourth Ezra xiii. 37).

Hebrew theology has a different source, and comes from Daniel vii., where the Messiah is pictured descending in clouds of heaven. In Semitic thought metaphysical ideas are of necessity expressed by metaphor; and so in Jewish theology to say that a thing exists in heaven means that it is ideal and eternal. Accordingly, the idea of the Messiah who descends from heaven is worked out in further development in the later Jewish books. The book of Enoch says (Chap. xlviii.) that He was chosen and hidden before God before the world was created, and will be before Him to all eternity. And, in like manner, the fourth book of Ezra speaks of God's Son [or Servant] the Messiah as hidden in a secret place until the time of his revealing shall come (Chap. xiii. 26, 52). When such conceptions as these were combined with the Old Testament doctrine of the creative Word of God, eternal in the heavens (Psalms xxxiii. 6, cxix. 89), it was not difficult to pass onward to the New Testament doctrine of creation by the preexistent Christ. The Apostle accordingly does not find it necessary to bring forward arguments to prove that doctrine; but, on the other hand, he takes pains to prove at length that the Son is superior in name and office to the Angels: and therefore—as the argument proceeds in Chapter ii.—that the dispensation which He administers supersedes that Old Testament economy which rested, as the Jews boasted, on angelic mediation. To us this may seem much more obvious than the points which are taken for granted as undisputed; but it clearly was not so to the first readers.

We must remember that our Lord Himself never gave a theoretical explanation of the Divine prerogative He claims. The doctrine of the person of Christ was gradually worked out, and such hints for it as were afforded by pre-Christian speculation were not always helpful. Certainly the superiority of the Messiah to the angels was a point distinctly suggested in Daniel vii., and developed in that part of the

Jewish theology which had the highest view of the person of the Messiah (Book of Enoch xl. 5, lv. 4, lxi. 8). But on the other hand the Logos of Alexandrian speculation is not sharply marked off from the plurality of Logoi, whose unity He is; and the latter again are identified with the angels by Philo, who sometimes calls the Logos Himself angel or archangel. Again, it was a common Jewish opinion, expressed in the Palestinian Targum, that the angels were associated with God in the creation of man; the words *Let us make man* being held to be addressed to them. And, in general, the lofty predicates of the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament disposed men to form a very high estimate of the functions and dignity of the angels. The Epistle to the Colossians shews us angel-worship as a temptation offered to the church, apparently by Jewish Christians of an Essene type. And we know that one form of Gnostic Docetism was characterized by the doctrine that Christ was an angel.

We have no reason to assume that any definite heresy of a similar kind had found support among the first readers of our Epistle. But at least their views were not so clear as to render it superfluous to insist on the Scripture proof of the inferiority of the angels to Christ. It is therefore argued (1) that no angels could be addressed in the words of Psalm ii. (Verse 7): (2) that the subordination of the angels to Christ at his second coming is predicted in Scripture (Verse 6). Then, to give a still more clear and convincing proof of the superiority of Christ, the angels are characterized in Old Testament language. It must be remembered that the contrast of the physical and the spiritual, the mutable and the eternal, the earthly and the heavenly, runs through the whole Epistle, and dominates the whole contrast of Dispensations. The Old Testament allows this contrast to be applied to the angels and Christ. In the later parts of the Old Testament the angels appear in



the closest association with physical powers of the universe. Nay, in Psalm civ. 4 they are actually identified with winds (not as A.V. *spirits*) and flaming fire—the very form of their existence is unstable, in correspondence with the changing necessities of their ministrations. This connection between the angels and cosmical powers must probably be taken as giving additional point to the subsequent citation from Psalm cii. In their appearance and ministerial functions the angels are connected with created things, which pass away; whereas the eternal sovereignty of Christ is unchangeable as the person of Him who is superior to all these mutations, inasmuch as the mutable things of creation are his own handiwork. Finally, in Verses 13, 14 we have a fresh statement of the contrast. While the Son sits at God's right hand in kingly dignity, the angels are continually sent forth (mark the present participle) on ministerial functions; yea, in the service of the heirs of salvation, who, therefore, are no longer in any sense subject to them and their dispensation.

W. ROBERTSON SMITH.

## THE CORINTHIAN SADDUCEES.

### 1 CORINTHIANS XV.

A VERY good canon for the exposition of the argumentative parts of Holy Scripture is, Never to be satisfied until we ourselves feel the force of the sacred writer's reasoning, that is, until he compels us, if we accept his premises, to accept also his conclusions. For, unless the arguments of the Bible convince us as arguments, we cannot be sure that we understand the sense they were designed to convey.

To feel the logical force of the arguments in St. Paul's famous Chapter on the resurrection is by no means easy.

For this Chapter is a refutation of a very definite assertion by some members of the church at Corinth; and, like all refutations, can be appreciated only so far as we place ourselves in the mental position of those against whom it was originally directed. And, unfortunately, this position can now be determined only by indications scattered through St. Paul's attack upon it, and by uncertain inference from casual allusions elsewhere to opinions which seem to have been somewhat similar. In spite, however, of the scantiness of our sources of information, and pursuing the only safe method of elucidating refutations, I shall attempt to reconstruct in this paper the opinions of those who in the early Corinthian church denied the resurrection of the dead; and in another paper I shall endeavour to reproduce the arguments with which the Apostle meets this denial.

The words, *How say some among you*, imply that the opinion in question was held by only a part, by a small part we may hope, of the church members at Corinth; but that by them it was openly asserted. These men were, however, sufficiently numerous, or their error sufficiently serious, to demand a long and earnest refutation in a letter written to the whole church.

There is no hint that this matter, like the question of marriage in Chapter vii., was mentioned in the letter from the Corinthian church to St. Paul. Indeed, the surprise with which in Verse 12 he introduces it, in contrast to the matter of fact style of Chapter vii. 1, Chapter viii. 1, but similar to Chapter v. 1, Chapter vi. 1, suggests that it came to him by hearsay. It would seem that the Christians at Corinth, like many others in similar circumstances in all ages, had sought information about matters of secondary importance, while overlooking altogether evils, such as the toleration by the church of the gross offender of Chapter v. 1 and of the erroneous teaching here refuted, which were eating away the life of the community.

The conspicuous and exact repetition of the words which St. Paul puts into the lips of his opponents, which we may render literally *resurrection of dead men there is not*, and the precisely equivalent phrase, *dead men are not raised* also repeated verbatim, suggest that we have here the exact words used at Corinth. If so, the error before us took the form not of doubt or of mere dissatisfaction with the Apostle's positive teaching, but of direct and confident counter assertion. These men were by no means agnostics, as are so many now. They categorically asserted the contradictory of that which in this Chapter St. Paul maintained.

As the words stand before us they deny in the widest sense the possibility of the uprising into bodily life of those from whose bodies life has once departed. The compass of this denial is widened by the absence of the article from each of the nouns. For the article might have limited the denial to some special class of dead men, or to resurrection in some definite form present to the speaker's mind. The words before us declare, without any limitation whatever, that for those of whom it may be said that they are dead there is no rising from the couch of death.

That these words were actually used at Corinth in this wide sense, or at least in a sense almost as wide as this, is made quite certain by St. Paul's argument. For we notice that although he summons a long line of witnesses to the fact that Christ is risen, and carefully develops the proof of this afforded by his own testimony taken in connection with the spiritual effect of this testimony upon his readers, he does not find it needful to give any proof whatever that the resurrection of Christ overturns the Corinthian denial of the general resurrection. This he assumes without hesitation in Verses 13 and 16. And that he does so implies that the denial was meant in the wide sense indicated above. For, otherwise, it would not be disproved by the simple fact that Christ has risen.

This will be the more evident if we remember that many objections to the general resurrection are not valid against the resurrection of Christ. For instance : the dissolution of the body and the reappearance of its constituents in other material forms present a most serious objection to the general resurrection as understood by some ; but have no bearing upon the case of Him whose "flesh did not see corruption." And to all men the resurrection of those who have been dead thousands of years is more difficult to conceive than that of Him who lay in the grave less than two days. In other words, objections might be brought against the resurrection of dead men generally, which would not be met by the case of Christ. And that St. Paul quotes the case of Christ as conclusive against his opponents proves that their objection did not rest on the dissolution of the bodies of the dead, but upon the supposed absolute impossibility of a departed spirit returning to take up its abode, or at least its permanent abode, in a material body.

That the denial at Corinth of the resurrection involved a denial that Christ had risen, and this so clearly that St. Paul even in argument contents himself with merely asserting that the one denial implies the other, suggests at once that this could not have altogether escaped the notice of the deniers themselves. Certainly, if the great fact that Christ has risen had taken firm hold of them, and had moulded as it ought to have done their entire thought and life, they would have detected its incompatibility with this denial : for we are ever ready to trace to its logical consequence that which we fully believe. Therefore, since in a very special way the resurrection of Christ was the ground of the faith of the early Christians, we infer surely that these men were Christians in little more than name : and of this inference we shall find in Verse 34 a strong confirmation. At the same time, that St. Paul does not charge them with denying expressly that Christ had risen seems to imply that

they had not ventured openly to do this; although they must or might have seen that it was necessarily involved in their own bold denial.

That, after discussing the fact of the resurrection, St. Paul goes on in Verse 35 to discuss at length the manner of it, suggests that, at least by some at Corinth, the fact was denied because the manner was to them inconceivable. Indeed, the charge of folly in Verse 36 implies clearly that the foregoing question had been actually put, though not necessarily by all who denied the resurrection. Evidently some persons foolishly assumed, as men have done in all ages, that resurrection of the dead implies that the very bodies laid in the grave will again come to life. And, since the present body is unfit for endless life, they probably denied the resurrection altogether. This is suggested also by the argument that the resurrection body will differ from that laid in the grave as much as the rising blade of wheat differs from the seed cast into the earth or as the bright celestial bodies above our heads differ from the earthly objects around us, and by the assertion that, whether or not we die, our bodies cannot pass unchanged into the kingdom of God. This explanation is, I must admit, in part inconsistent with the hope, implied in Verse 19, of surviving to the coming of Christ and thus passing without death into endless blessedness. And this inconsistency I cannot altogether remove. It is, however, well to remember that all error is more or less inconsistent with itself. And we need not suppose that all the opinions combated in this Chapter were held by the same persons. Of those who denied the resurrection, it is quite possible that Verses 18, 19, 29-34 were directed against some who professed to expect to pass without essential change into glory at Christ's coming and who based all their hopes on surviving to his day; and that Verses 35-49 were a reply to others who thought that human bodies were altogether unfit for endless



blessedness. Against both these classes the protest of Verses 50-57 would come with full force. The inconsistency alluded to above is therefore no sufficient reason for casting aside my suggestion about Verses 35-49, and still less my suggestions about the earlier part of the Chapter.

It is worthy of notice that although St. Paul's set purpose is to disprove the assertion *that there is no resurrection of dead men* he makes use of several arguments which have no direct bearing on the resurrection of the body, but simply prove that there is a life beyond death. Such are the arguments in Verses 18, 19, 29, 30-32. By using these arguments he tacitly assumes that the latter of these doctrines implies the former. But this is by no means self-evident. Indeed Plato,<sup>1</sup> and Cicero,<sup>2</sup> taught expressly and emphatically that the soul will survive the body and endure for ever; but neither of them seems to have had any conception of resurrection of the body, *i.e.* of the soul reclothing itself in an abiding material form. They looked upon the body as being merely a prison of the soul, and death as release from it. It is true that Plato taught that sometimes departed spirits return to earth to animate other bodies. But this he regarded<sup>3</sup> as but a lengthening of the period of bondage, and held that at death the purer spirits were free for ever from material clothing. In their experience the bondage of the soul to the body was so complete and so hurtful that their highest hope was simply for the soul's rescue from this bondage. Of a spiritual body, *i.e.* one over which the spirit will have complete control and which will be a perfect organ for the self-manifestation of the spirit, they had no conception. So complete a victory of spirit over matter was utterly beyond their thoughts. In absolute contrast to these views, St. Paul, when proving the resurrection of the dead, simply proves that there is a life

<sup>1</sup> Especially in the *Phædo*.

<sup>2</sup> Tusculan Disputations, Book I.

<sup>3</sup> *Phædo*, p. 81, etc.

beyond death. This implies that both he and his opponents held that these doctrines stood or fell together; otherwise some of his arguments had no force. And we cannot doubt that he understood the opinions of his adversaries. We therefore infer that the Christians at Corinth who denied the resurrection meant by that denial to deny also that there is a life beyond death.

We notice in passing that the inseparable connection, assumed both by the Apostle and the Corinthian sceptics is implied in the very creation of man; for it is evident that his body is an essential part of his nature. We cannot therefore conceive that he will attain the goal of his being until his body is rescued from the foe who once triumphed over both body and spirit, and is made a sharer of the glory promised to the spirit within.

With the opinions asserted at Corinth and with St. Paul's refutation of them we have an interesting coincidence in the teaching of the Jewish Sadducees and our Lord's refutation of it. They taught, as we learn from Mark xii. 18 and Luke xx. 27, *that there is no resurrection*; and against them Christ brings an argument (Luke xx. 38) which, like some of St. Paul's arguments, proves clearly that the departed servants of God still live, but has no direct bearing upon the resurrection of the dead. A connecting link between this argument and the Sadducean denial of the resurrection is found in Acts xxiii. 8, where we learn that the Sadducees denied not only the resurrection of the body but the existence of a disembodied *spirit* and of higher orders of beings. Yet in the passages quoted above from the Gospels we have mention only of a denial of the resurrection. It is therefore evident that this denial, like that of the Gentile Sadducees at Corinth, was meant to deny also a life beyond death.

Yet these Corinthians were professed Christians, as we learn from the words *some among you*; just as the

Sadducees were professed followers of Moses. And from Verse 19 we infer with certainty that they professed to cherish a *hope in Christ*. But their hope was dependent on continuance of the present bodily life. Now all hope in Christ implies belief of at least some part of the good-tidings about Christ; and we may conceive that they held not a little of the gospel preached by St. Paul. They believed probably that God accepts as righteous and receives into his family all who believe the Gospel, and gives the Holy Spirit to be in them the source of a life like that of Christ. And they were waiting professedly,<sup>1</sup> for the return of Christ to earth to found an endless Kingdom of which they were already citizens. At the same time they had no expectation of life beyond death. Consequently, their hopes of glory hung upon their survival to the day of Christ. They were *only men who in this life had hope in Christ*.

To these views an interesting comparison and contrast is found in 1 Thessalonians iv. 13-18. These Verses cannot be accepted as full proof that the Sadducean opinions held by some church members at Corinth were shared by the Thessalonican Christians: for all men console the sorrowing by truths well known to and admitted by them. At the same time St. Paul's matter of fact teaching suggests that the instruction he gives was needed, and that the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead had not taken its proper place in their thoughts. And this is just what we might expect in a church from which, within a month of its founding, its founder was rudely and suddenly torn. We may well conceive that at Thessalonica St. Paul had plainly taught the judgment to come, righteousness by faith, the adoption of believers into the family of God, and the gift to them of the Holy Spirit; but had said very little about the death of the people of God. This omission would be the more easy because, as a child of Pharisees,<sup>2</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. i. 7

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxiii. 6

Apostle had been taught from childhood that the faithful departed still live in the presence of God; to him this doctrine was not distinctively Christian. We notice however that, in spite of this defect of their faith,<sup>1</sup> these Thessalonican Christians are most highly commended. In many things they form a marked contrast to the men whose opinions we are now discussing. But their deficiency in this one point helps us to understand the opinions which in the Chapter before us St. Paul so severely condemns.

The warnings of Verses 33, 34, imply that the denial of the resurrection was beginning to produce at Corinth immoral results, results inconsistent not only with belief in a future life but with belief in the coming of Christ. For, apart from all thought of a life beyond death, the prospect of Christ's return to judge the world is sufficient reason, and in 1 Thessalonians v. 1-11 is appealed to as sufficient reason, for vigilance and sobriety. This confirms our former inference that the Corinthian Sadducees were Christians in little more than name. Indeed, the Apostle intimates that they were ignorant of God and a disgrace to the church. In contrast to them the sorrowful doubters at Thessalonica were sincere followers of Christ, who found it difficult to believe that those separated from them by death would share the glory for which the living were waiting. For them their brother in Christ has only words of sympathy and love. The Corinthian unbelievers were bold deniers, careless of the terrible logical consequences of their denial; men whose loose morals betrayed the worthlessness of their faith.

What were the opinions about a future life prevalent at Corinth among the classes of men from whom the earliest Christian converts were drawn, it is impossible now to determine with certainty. We have already seen that St. Paul's argument implies that the teaching of Plato and of

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. iii. 10.



Cicero about a future disembodied state of blessedness had no place among those to whom he wrote. And it is not difficult to conceive that this teaching was understood and accepted only by the educated few. Indeed, of the people of his own day Plato says as much in the *Phædo* (p. 70a): "Touching the soul men have much unbelief, fearing lest when it has left the body it is no longer anywhere, but that in the day in which the man dies it corrupts and perishes, and as soon as it is removed from the body it goes forth scattered like breath or smoke, and goes away flying in all directions and is no longer anywhere." Or they may have shared the thought which gave rise to, and would be perpetuated by, Achilles' lament<sup>1</sup> that he would be a serf of a man of small means on earth rather than reign over all the dead.

Let us now suppose that to men who from childhood had been accustomed to think that at death the soul ceased to be or continued only in a worthless shadow-life, or who thought very little about the whole matter, St. Paul had preached that God accepts as righteous and adopts to be his children all who believe the Gospel, and gives to them the Holy Spirit to be in them the source of a new life; that Christ will return to earth to establish an endless Kingdom of infinite glory, and, though perhaps less conspicuously, that at his coming the dead will rise clothed in material bodies to share this endless Kingdom. Let us also suppose that by many men of different dispositions this teaching was accepted. In their thought life beyond death would be indissolubly linked with resurrection of the body. For they had heard of the one doctrine only in connection with the other. And perhaps some of them had observed that, in view of the creation of the race, the one doctrine involves the other. Supposing all this, it is not difficult to conceive that in some the impression made by the Gospel was

<sup>1</sup> *Odyssey* xi. 489.



gradually weakened by the upgrowth of deeply rooted love of the things of the present life; and that in these, even while they were professing to wait for the coming and Kingdom of Christ, there sprang up first doubt and then disbelief that the iron hand of death could be made to release its prey, and bodies once laid in the grave or reduced to ashes could participate in endless life. Such disbelief would assume the form of denial of the resurrection; for it would be prompted by the difficulty of conceiving the process of resurrection. But it would practically involve a denial of life beyond death; for this had been put before them only in connection with the uprising of the body.

Such is my reconstruction of the creed of those whom I venture to call the Corinthian Sadducees. In another paper I shall endeavour to support this reconstruction by an exposition of the arguments with which St. Paul refutes it. If I can shew, as I hope to shew, that against these opinions every argument of the Apostle bears with full force, I shall do something to prove that, at least in its main features, my reconstruction is correct. And among these arguments I shall pay special attention to that contained in the allusion to those who were *baptized for the dead*.

JOSEPH AGAR BEET.

## THE HISTORICAL CHRIST OF ST. PAUL.

### INTRODUCTION.

THE design we have here in view is an attempt to discover to what extent the facts of the Four Gospels are confirmed by the statements of the four undoubted Pauline Epistles. The field of research is by no means new. It was first suggested to us by Dr. Stanley Leathes in his Boyle Lecture for 1869, and it has since formed the subject of many essays

and articles. There are, however, some fields which become fresh and green in proportion as they are trodden. A narrative of facts loses its freshness after the first recital; but an account of the relation which these facts bear to one another will become more fresh with every recital. The relations of things cannot be comprehended at a glance; the bearings of those which have been comprehended cannot at a glance be seen. Every fact in the universe bears some reference to every other fact, and the study of all its meanings would be practically an infinite study. It is therefore so far an advantage not to be the first in such a field; the merit of its discovery belongs to its discoverer, but the extent of its boundaries and the possibility of its treasures are problems to be solved by the subsequent explorer.

To the Biblical student of the nineteenth century the importance of the present inquiry must at once be evident. We say to the Biblical student of the nineteenth century; to the student of any other century it might well appear a superfluous task. When Paley wrote his "Evidences of Christianity" he never dreamed that it would be incumbent on him to get back behind the Gospels. The Christian apologist was held to be in possession of four direct witnesses to the events of the life of Christ, who had each left a narrative of his experiences, and whose narrative had been attested by the testimony of the immediately succeeding age. The birth of what is called "the higher criticism" has made it no longer possible for the Biblical scholar to take these things for granted. The positions which the last century deemed impregnable have been subjected to a vehement attack, and a battle has been waged around them which is not yet decided. The school of Tübingen has professed to tear up from the roots the sources of Christian history. It has promised to shew that the Gospels of the Four Witnesses, so far from being the production of Christ's disciples and contemporaries, are the product of an age

later by a hundred years; an age which had outgrown the memory of the earliest Christian impressions, and which had entered into a circle of thought where it was impossible to recall them. It has endeavoured to transform the narrative of the Acts into a legend of myths designed to exhibit the reconciliation of abstract principles which had hitherto proved a source of discord in the early Christian church. It has swept away most of those testimonies which were once referred to the men called *Apostolic Fathers*, to mark the fact that they were the immediate followers of the apostles. The Epistle of Barnabas has been proved not to belong to Barnabas; the Letters of Ignatius have been reduced to a minimum; the Shepherd of Hermas has been attributed to a later age; one Epistle of Clement and one of Polycarp are alone allowed to remain as the probable patristic products of the first century.

In the midst of this disintegration one naturally asks where he ought to turn. The sources of information which he hitherto believed to be the original wellspring appear to assume the aspect of derivative streams, whose own origin is lost in the past. What should be the attitude of mind which under these circumstances the apologist ought to adopt? Shall he suspend his judgment until the researches of the age determine the value of the disputed documents? That is tantamount to giving up the argument. Shall he fall back upon internal evidences, and leave the historical facts to the tender mercies of the critic? That has, in general, been the modern tendency. The outworks of Christianity have been imperilled, and its defenders have retired within the fortress. They have entrenched themselves behind ramparts which they believe to be unassailable. They have taken refuge in those eternal principles of truth which they find expressed and implied throughout the Sacred Volume, and have sought to rest the evidence of Christianity on its indisputable adaptation to the deepest

laws of human ethics. Yet the more the subject is studied the more evident must it be that, in this respect, Christianity does not stand alone. The morality which it inculcates is not announced to the world as a discovery, but is given forth as an appeal to experience. It is spoken for the most part to the natural instincts of unlettered men ; and it takes the precedence of theological teaching in order that the new religion may begin by addressing an old susceptibility. The morality of the New Testament is theoretically older than the New Testament, though it is practically the product of it. Before Christianity came men knew it ; after Christianity came they began to live it. Yet this is the very marvel to be explained ; the historical fact is after all the real puzzle. We want to know why it is that those truths, admittedly eternal and felt experimentally to have a reference to human nature, have yet come into full play only on so late a stage of time ; why it is that principles which, when recognized, are seen to have their root in our deepest humanity, have yet owed their recognition to the advent of historical circumstances which had their birth in the old world's death. There must surely have been in these circumstances a special power, a peculiar energizing influence. That which has succeeded in effecting what four thousand years of previous history had failed to effect is certainly worthy of historical investigation ; and all the more so if these past four<sup>1</sup> thousand years had potentially at their command the same materials of human nature. The question is : why did they not reach these elements of the human soul ? why did they not waken these principles which were really in existence ? why did they leave it for a later age to discover their own treasures ? above all, what was there in that later age which made it able to kindle into life those intuitions of the human spirit which the millenniums of past history had failed even to find ?

<sup>1</sup> We use the number only as marking the popular traditional Chronology.



It is, therefore, impossible for us to escape an interest in the question, What is the origin of Christianity? We are driven back in the last resort to a historical inquiry, and are forced to recognize the beginnings of the Christian manifestation as the ultimate object of research. Can we discover those beginnings? Do we possess any document contemporaneous with the primitive Christian age? Can we lay our hand upon any monument which undoubtedly and unmistakably belongs to that era in which Christianity had its dawn? If we can, we are in a position to answer the question: What aspect did Christianity present to its immediate followers? If we cannot, we shall be forced to confess that our historical information regarding the sources of our religion is at best but second hand. If we are no longer able to prove that the four Gospels belong to the first Christian century, we must either discover an undoubtedly earlier document, or be content to remain in suspense on a subject of vital interest.

Now let us imagine it were suddenly proclaimed to the world that an undoubtedly earlier document had been discovered, a document written by a contemporary of the first Christian age, who might easily with his own eyes have seen the marvellous dawn; a manuscript so indubitably genuine that the most destructive results of the most negative criticism had not ventured to assail it. The effect of such a discovery would be instantaneous. It would become the main centre of interest, the immediate object of scrutiny. The Christian consciousness would rejoice to feel itself in possession of a fifth Gospel which required no words of apologetic introduction, and which only waited to have its message unfolded. Men would eagerly ask what this Gospel said. Did it present to the world a Christ in any respect corresponding to the Christ that has been worshipped for eighteen centuries? did it reveal the portrait of a face and form whose features and whose lineaments were



congruous with the features and the lineaments of the old portrait which has been so long familiar? That would be the question we should naturally ask first of all, and the question in whose answer we should take the greatest interest. We should look to the new document to decide whether the object of our Christian reverence was or was not the same object which was revered by the primitive Christian age; and if we found in that age the image of a Christ in every sense identical with our own, we should arrive at an evidence of Christianity which would place our belief in its historical truth above the floods of Biblical criticism.

Now it is not always borne in mind that what we have here supposed as an imagination is a profound reality. We are actually in possession of just such a document. We have a manuscript professing to be written, not only by one of the apostolic age, but by one of the apostolic company; claiming to be the work of a man who had seen the earliest manifestations of Christian power, and who had himself been made a recipient of that power; bearing incontestable and uncontested evidence of being the product of a period not later than from twenty to thirty years subsequent to the alleged fact of Christ's resurrection; accepted by negative criticism of the extremest school as occupying an impregnable position, and received as authentic alike by the believer and the unbeliever. This manuscript is really a fifth Gospel, and not the less so because it is not in the form of a Gospel; its testimony to historical truth is an unconscious testimony, coming forth spontaneously and incidentally. It consists of the four Epistles of St. Paul whose genuineness is universally recognized: those to the Romans, the Corinthians, and the Galatians. There are other Pauline Epistles whose genuineness is nearly as undoubted; but in a research of this sort one should take the lowest ground, and accept only what is universally conceded. The Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians

have escaped the flood of modern criticism, and remain to us as the undisputed monuments of the primitive Christian age. At first sight it might appear as if the concession were of little historical value, as if it were a possession chiefly valuable to the man who had conquered doubt of the facts and was in search of confirmation of the dogmas. In the days of Paley, indeed, these four Epistles of St. Paul were seen to have a bearing upon the historical narrative of the Acts; and the greatest work of that theologian is unquestionably the book called "*Horæ Paulinæ*," in which are traced the undesigned coincidences between the statements of the former and the records of the latter. The book of Acts however does not profess to be a narrative of the dawn of Christianity; it is a history which presumes the existence of a previous history, and brings us no nearer to the originating principle of which we are in search. It seemed, therefore, for a time as if the preservation of the four Pauline Epistles would prove a boon only to the advanced believer, and not to the historical inquirer. A deeper study has led to a different conclusion. There has begun to dawn the conviction that it may yet be possible to do for the Epistles and the Gospels what Paley has done for the Epistles and the Acts, to establish a congruity between them. It is increasingly felt that these Epistles imply an underlying history, that even their most didactic and abstract statements indicate the belief in certain historical facts. The simple question is, What are these facts? Are they in number sufficient to constitute, when united, a connected historical narrative? Is the historical narrative which they constitute compatible with that record of early Christianity which for the last eighteen centuries has been recognized as the Gospel story?

It is to the consideration of this point that we propose to devote ourselves. At the outset there are two courses open to us. We may either start with the conception in our

minds of that life of Christ which we now possess, and inquire whether it is borne out by the statements of the Pauline Epistles ; or we may come to our task with a mind unbiased by any conception, assuming that hitherto we have known nothing of the Founder of Christianity, and seeking to obtain that knowledge from the new document before us. Both courses, we say, are open to us ; but it is clear that the latter should come first. Analysis should precede synthesis. If we would approach the subject scientifically, we must try to discard our preconceived impressions until these have been confirmed by our present research. We ought first of all to examine the document in question, to read over seriatim its verses and chapters, in order to discover where any fact of history is either expressed or implied ; and to consider calmly and dispassionately what that fact amounts to. When we have gathered all our materials, in other words, when we have completed our analysis, we shall be in a position to begin our synthesis. We shall be able to put together the different elements we have collected, and to arrange them in the form of a life-picture ; and it will then become our duty and our province to compare the life picture of the new document with the historical portrait of the old. If the result of the comparison should be to establish an identity of nature between the Christ of the Gospels and the Christ of the Pauline Epistles, we shall be warranted in coming to the conclusion that the portrait contained in the Gospels represents the earliest Christian tradition. We shall be able to arrive at this conclusion quite apart from the question of their authenticity and genuineness. We are admittedly in possession of a document of unquestioned authenticity and genuineness. We profess to derive from this document a life portrait of the Founder of Christianity ; and we may be sure that *this* life portrait at least represents the earliest tradition. If we find, as a last result, that it is substan-

tially in harmony with the figure of the Christ delineated in the Gospels, the inference will be unavoidable that, to whatever age these Gospels belong, the Christ whom they depict is the Christ of primitive Christianity.

When we said that we should reserve till the close the comparison of the two life portraits, we did not mean to say that we should abstain from comparing analytically the historical statements in the Gospels with the historical statements in the Epistles. On the contrary, this is one main part of our task; the meaning of the Epistolary statements can only be brought out by comparison with those alleged facts so familiar to us in the Gospels. What we do mean to convey is, that neither in the Epistles nor in the Gospels can a life portrait be presented to the mind until the facts have been completely and exhaustively analysed; the preliminary comparison can only be one of isolated incidents. The truth is, we must expect this evidence, in the course of its evolution, to exhibit the characteristics of all evidence in the act of being taken. The peculiarity of evidence in the act of being taken is, that it has a tendency to appear much more trivial than it really is. The witness wonders at the simplicity of the questions put to him; he thinks them irrelevant, stupid, meaningless; he can see in them nothing calculated to throw light upon the case. Yet how often it happens that the answer to the seemingly most irrelevant question is the point on which the whole case turns. In all cases which do not rest on direct testimony the demonstration lies in the completed whole. The parts, taken separately and singly, may seem weak and inadequate; they derive their importance from the fact of their union. Even so in the present inquiry there will be found to be more in the whole than in all the parts taken separately; and circumstances which seem in themselves to afford little room for inference will assume a momentous import when seen in the links of a united chain.



To these preliminary remarks we have only to add that in this study of the Pauline Epistles it is *the facts* alone we are in search of. It would be very easy to elaborate from this study a colossal system of theology; but experience has clearly proved that out of the same materials men may elaborate very different systems. Our interpretation of doctrines depends on our principle of interpretation; and our Paul will be an Arminian or a Calvinist according as we ourselves are Arminian or Calvinistic. But where the statement amounts to a matter of fact, we stand on ground upon which all schools of opinion may join hands. The materials we are in search of in this inquiry are purely historical materials. We ask not what was Paul's system of theology; we ask only what was his Christ of history. We seek not to discover what were his special doctrines, or the points in which he was distinguished from the earlier Judaic party; we desire to find out what in him was not special, to discover that common substratum of historical fact which he held in common with all parties. We wish, if possible, to lay our hand on the earliest Christian tradition regarding the life, the acts, and the teaching of the Son of Man. If we can lay our hand upon it in these Epistles, we shall have reached something more than a tradition; we shall have approached the very confines of the primitive Christian age, and touched almost by immediate contact the last fringe of its vanishing garment. We shall have more direct evidence of the history of early Christianity than we ever could have had if the story of its dawn had been recorded by the pen of the Roman Tacitus; for we shall see the Christ of opening Christendom as He appeared to the eyes of a contemporary in whose character were singularly blended those qualities which made him an acceptable and a trustworthy observer—the liberal culture of the Roman, and the religious fervour of the Jew.

## I. THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

We come now to consider in detail those passages which seem to us to point to the possibility of constructing a Christ out of the four undoubted Epistles of St. Paul. We begin with the Epistle to the Romans. In Verses 3 and 4 of the opening Chapter we are confronted by two historical references of a very direct kind; the one pointing to the beginning of Christ's course, the other to its close. The words, literally translated, are these: "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ, who was born of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and powerfully determined to be the Son of God according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead." The point which here first invites our attention is the belief entertained by Paul with regard to the ancestry of the Founder of Christianity; he calls Him the son of David. In the opening Chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke an attempt is made to trace the genealogy of the Christ whom we now recognize; and his origin is carried back to the same royal source. It has however been averred by some modern critics that these genealogies are nothing more than attempts. The line of thought adopted by these critics is something like this:—"There was a general expectation that, when the Messiah appeared, He would come from the lineage of David. As the mythical haze of time gathered round the person of Jesus of Nazareth, men sought to find in Him the fulfilment of the Jewish expectation. They tried to connect his person with the ancient hope of Israel, and to win the mind of the Jew by establishing a congruity between his life and their prophecies. Hence they constructed the two irreconcilable genealogies which form the respective overtures to the first and third Gospels, with the design to make it appear that the Christ, whose outward life was seemingly so unkingly, was yet the veritable de-

scendant of Israel's greatest king." These critics go on to tell us that in the course of the Gospel narrative itself we are accidentally reminded of a time when another Christ was recognized. In St. Matthew xxii. 42-45 we are confronted by what may be called the reminiscence of an earlier day. The Founder of Christianity is there seen in his true light. He is quite conscious that He is not the son of David, and that this fact alone is sufficient to invalidate his Messianic claim. Accordingly He seeks to alter the popular conception of the Messiah, endeavours to throw doubt upon the position that the Christ when He appears must necessarily come from the seed of David. He asks: "What think ye of Christ? whose son is He?" He does not mean of course: "What think ye of Me?" He is asking their opinion of the Old Testament Messiah, their interpretation of the words in which the Jewish Scriptures foretold the Lord's anointed. The answer naturally is that the Messiah expected by the nation and foretold by the Scriptures is to be one born of the seed of David. Jesus, knowing that He Himself did not fulfil this condition, endeavours to shake the evidence for believing it: "Why then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand; if David call him Lord, how is he his son?"

Such is the ingenious argument by which it has been attempted to prove that the original Christ was not the son of David, and that the story of his Messianic descent was an aftergrowth. But now the question is, How much time shall we allow to enable this story to grow? Here is a document which beyond all question belongs to the apostolic age, and which dates from a period not later than twenty-five years after the time of the actual Christian Founder; a document which is confessedly written by one himself in the apostolic office and in familiar intercourse with the earliest disciples of the Master; and here it is distinctly stated, and

stated as a fact commonly recognized, that the Founder of Christianity was the son of David. It will not be denied, we presume, that, from an apologetic point of view it was Paul's interest to make light of the fact that the Christian Founder had a Messianic descent; that, if there had been any doubt about the matter, it would have been natural for him to have been silent on the subject. So far from being anxious to give prominence to the conception of the Jewish Messiah, he wanted as much as possible to divert the minds of men from that conception. He desired to let them see that there was a higher element in the Christ than that of a physical descent from the royal line of David; and it was, in truth, this desire which prompted the utterance of the very passage we are considering. If then Paul had known that the belief in Christ's descent was a popular delusion, or if there had existed in his own mind any doubt as to its historical reality, he would have deemed it an advantage to his cause to have remained silent on the question; he would naturally have felt that the best way to elevate the Christian consciousness to the worship of the true Messiah was to ignore those elements which had been conceived essential to the Jewish one. This Paul has not done; he has placed in the very foreground of his Epistle the acknowledgment of Christ's Messianic descent. He has placed it there in the manner of one who takes a thing for granted. It is his object to shew that the Founder of Christianity was more than the Jewish Messiah, and that there was a portion of his nature which could not be referred to any earthly lineage. In admitting that there was a part of his nature which could be traced to the royal line of David he simply accepted a notorious fact, which must be received alike by the Judaic and by the Gentile element in the Christian church. If the passage in St. Matthew xxii. 42 stood alone, it might perhaps have afforded ground for the conjecture of the modern critic; but when we find in a document which



is certainly earlier and unmistakably genuine, the statement that Christ's Davidic descent did not debar Him from an additional and yet higher origin, we seem to discover in the Pauline passage a key to the interpretation of the subsequent Gospel narrative.

Let us pass now to the statement of this higher origin. The physical birth of the Christian Founder is said to establish his Davidic descent ; but the Apostle goes on to declare that the actual life of the Founder afforded proof of an element in his nature transcending any earthly lineage : "powerfully determined to be the Son of God by the resurrection of the dead." Our English version translates, "by the resurrection *from* the dead" ; the Greek is more general and more suggestive. It implies that the belief in Christ's resurrection was not simply the belief that He Himself was raised ; but that the principle of life in Him, which made his rising inevitable, was that which gave Him power to be the Resurrection and the Life of the world. The full force of the passage amounts to the statement that the Son of Man, by reason of his spirituality, possessed power to revive the human spirit ; and that the strongest evidence of this power was afforded in the fact of his own resurrection, which was itself the first act of a great process of regeneration. If we turn now to St. Matthew xxviii. 18, we shall find a remarkable parallel to the view exhibited in the present passage. In these concluding verses of the first Gospel, the Christ whom we now recognize as the original portrait of the Founder is represented, after his resurrection from the dead, as saying to his followers : "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth ; go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations." It is here indicated that the resurrection of Christ was regarded as a powerful determination of his Sonship ; it is spoken of as if it had brought to the Son of Man a fresh influx of the Divine energy : "all power is given unto Me." But there is more than this. The power

itself is contemplated as something which is to be shared with the world: "Go ye therefore and disciple all nations." If we take the passage in the Gospel in connection with the passage in the Epistle, we shall get considerable light upon the significance of the little word "therefore." The resurrection *from* the dead is contemplated as the resurrection *of* the dead. The power which has raised the Son of Man is a power which is now at the root of humanity, and which therefore must raise humanity with Him: "Because I live ye shall live also." We are not actuated by any desire to foist the Gospel conception of Christ upon the earliest age of the Christian church. We are studiously endeavouring to ignore the fact that we are coming to our task of research with any such conception in our mind. But we cannot ignore the fact that there is a literary production before us professing to be a portraiture and a life of the Founder of Christianity. We do not assume that it *is* such a portraiture, we do not assume that it *is* such a life; we simply accept the fact that it professes to be one. We find another literary production which does not profess to be a life of Christ, but which incidentally alludes to circumstances which it declares to be well known historical facts of that life; and as there can be no doubt at all that this latter production belongs to the apostolic age, it is only natural we should ask if its statements of fact are congruous with or antagonistic to the statements of the historical document. The passage in St. Matthew xxviii. 18 is a special illustration of the advantage of such Biblical comparisons; for it has been thought by some to be a later addition to the other parts of the Gospel. It seems to exhibit Christ in an attitude of transcendent authority which, according to these critics, marks an age of greater theological development. The question then becomes pertinent: Is there any trace of such a Christ in the earlier document? If such a trace be found, it will be no longer possible to conclude that the Christ of the

closing verses of St. Matthew bears any internal evidence of being an anachronism. The earlier document bears on its very opening page the unmistakable impress of a Christ who, in all essential respects, is precisely similar to the Founder of Christianity recognized in the closing verses of St. Matthew. Within twenty-five years after the departure of that Founder from the earth we find currently associated with his name, throughout the Christian community, the idea of a power over all humanity, a power universal in its extent and infinite in its intensity. The universality of its extent is marked by the fact that it is said to be exerted over the dead, a word which potentially embraces all mankind as death is the condition which is awaiting all the world. The infinitude of its intensity is marked by the fact that it is said to reach to the accomplishment of resurrection; the bringing of life out of nothingness is an infinite act. It is further implied that the possession of this power was determined at a particular time in the life of the Founder, determined at that time when, by his own resurrection, He became the firstfruits of them that sleep. In all these characteristics there is an essential oneness between the statement of the Pauline Epistle and the statement of the first Gospel; and the oneness furnishes a conclusive proof that, whatever may be the external evidence for a late date of the Gospel passage, its internal evidence is in favour of the belief that it reproduces the Christ of apostolic days.

Before quitting this opening passage of the Epistle to the Romans, it may be worth while to view it in connection with the 25th Verse of the same Chapter. It will be seen that the general effect of the passage already considered has been to assign to the Founder of Christianity a higher place in the early Christian consciousness than He is allowed to hold by negative critics. He is contemplated as possessing such a dignity as entitles Him to be called

“the Son of God.” Now the school of critics here alluded to have not attempted to evade the fact that the Christ of Paul is so conceived; they have taken refuge in another fortress. They contend that the Christ of Paul, though undoubtedly belonging to the apostolic age, does not belong to the innermost apostolic circle. The ministry of Paul, they say, was an innovation on the original Christian ministry; it sought to import a Gentile element into the Jewish community; it attempted to graft into the conception of the earliest Christian Founder an admixture of conceptions foreign to the soil of Palestine. The Gentile consciousness of God was totally different from the Judaic one. The Jew saw a great gulf fixed between himself and the Object of his worship; the Gentile believed that, by a principle of emanation, the Divine Spirit could impart Himself to those who revered Him. This impartation of the Divine Spirit made him to whom it was given a son of God. The thought was so familiar to the Gentile consciousness that it became natural to explain by it the greatness of every illustrious man. When a man had distinguished himself by great deeds, when he had performed feats of heroism, when he had achieved prodigies of valour, he was believed by the popular mind to be the favourite of the gods. When the visible presence of the man was removed by death, when the form which had once been so familiar was hid from mortal eyes, and the voice which had once been so powerful was silent to the world’s ear, the sense of Divine favour which he had been supposed to enjoy was magnified a hundredfold. The distance and the mystery of death gave to his name that solemnity which alone was wanted to transform admiration into reverence; and men looked back upon his earthly career as one of those brief and golden emanations which the powers of heaven occasionally vouchsafe to the dwellers on the earth. Now the fact here averred by the negative critics is perfectly true.



It is undeniable that the tendency of the Gentile world was to bridge the gulf between God and man, by recognizing in certain men those emanations of the Divine life which made them the sons of God. But, admitting the fact, are we prepared to admit the conclusion sought to be derived from it; that Paul was led to assign to the person of the Christian Founder a greater dignity than He possessed, by reason of that Gentile consciousness which permeated the Apostle's own mind? Was the Christ whom Paul revered nothing more than a poetic embodiment of those inward hopes and aspirations which had been awakened within the soul of the Apostle by his contact and intercourse with the Gentiles? That is the question which here invites an answer; and, singularly enough, the answer is supplied in the very Chapter which so powerfully reveals the Pauline sense of Christ's dignity. In that Chapter Paul is considering the condition of the pre-Christian world which made necessary the advent of Christianity; and he finds the condition of that world to have been as bad as it could well be. It is remarkable, however, that he surveys its badness from a Jewish standpoint; indeed, if we had no other passage of St. Paul than the Chapter before us, we should be apt to conclude that the writer was a zealous partisan of Jewish ideas. His main charge against the religion of the heathen is the Jewish one of idolatry. To the Palestinian religious consciousness the most sacred of all prohibitions was this, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image." The God of Judaism was the self-existent incommunicable Personality, whose messages might be conveyed by heavenly ministrants, but whose form could not be represented either by heaven or earth; no man could see Him and live. Accordingly the attempt to represent Him was, of all other things, to Judaism the most impious; it would have held in abhorrence the Gentile doctrine of apotheosis, the belief that a man could be taken up into the life of divine beings. And the point

to observe here is that, in whatever other respects Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles, he retained in this the natural bent of his nation. In ascribing Divine glory to the Christian Founder, so far is he from being actuated by enthusiasm for a poetic idea that at this very moment he is animated by an anti-Gentile impulse, an opposition to creature worship. To him the main ground of heathen corruption consists in the fact adduced in Verse 25, where he says that the Gentiles "change the truth of God into a lie, and worship and serve the creature more than the Creator." His mind is in an attitude of repulsion towards creature worship; and, in so far, it is in a thoroughly Jewish attitude. It is opposed to the reverence for the image; it is inimical to the adoration of the form. It is uttering a protest against the Gentile tendency to bend the knee and lift the eyes to an object which could be seen and touched and measured. Such a mental attitude on the part of Paul was naturally highly unfavourable to the acceptance of a doctrine of Incarnation. A doctrine of Incarnation demands, by its very nature, the association of a human form with the object of Divine worship; and a mind which is animated by a Judaic animosity to creature worship would not naturally be led to imagine such an association. If the natural development of Paul had never been arrested, there seems, from the 25th Verse of this Chapter, every reason to believe that his Jewish antipathy to the reverence of forms would have prompted him to oppose the belief in the Incarnation. If, in point of fact, he has not opposed it, if in this same Chapter, side by side with his Jewish prejudice, he has recorded his conviction that the Founder of Christianity was the Son of God, the conclusion would seem to be that there was something in the historical atmosphere diverting him from his normal inclinations, and something in the events and life of the time compelling him to recognize what his original instincts would have rejected.

Had he been constructing a mythical religion, had he been weaving a creed out of his own poetic fancy, it would have been a creed which expressed the distance of the Divine from the human. The fact that his actual faith is a union of the human with the Divine constitutes a certain proof that his strong mind was dominated by an influence in the historic air.

G. MATHESON.

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### THE SUPREMACY OF LOVE.

1 COR. xiii. 13.

AMIDST the flood of doubtful disputation which prevails respecting the first principles of religion and of duty, the supremacy of the virtue which St. Paul exalts in this passage is, in general terms, universally admitted. It might, indeed, be questioned whether this supremacy be consistent with the principles of a philosophy which would explain the progress of mankind, as of all other creatures, by the operation of a mutual struggle and a mutual antagonism. But at all events, whether consistently or not, philosophers and moralists of almost all schools of thought combine in inculcating love to others as the most important principle and guide of practical life. It is perpetually emerging, like the solid ground, from every deluge of speculation which sweeps over the moral world. In the forefront, for instance, of the chief expositions of the Positive Philosophy, love is described as the principle of life, while order is said to be its basis, and progress its end. In the growth of this virtue, in its exaltation to an enthusiastic height, we are constantly bidden to recognize an adequate pledge for the security of society, notwithstanding the overthrow of ancient creeds, and the disturbance of ancient order. The language,

indeed, in which this virtue is described, is generally far less simple, less direct, less real, and therefore less profound and fervid than that of the Apostle. But whether it be the enthusiasm of fraternity, or of equality, or of humanity, which is to take the place of older governing principles, in each case a homage, and often a willing and generous homage, is paid to this Apostolic declaration of the governing principle of human life. To the Christian, indeed, such schemes of social order and development may seem like fair structures without foundations; but none the less they afford a striking addition to the ever accumulating evidence of the correspondence of the Gospel with the deepest instincts of the heart, and they may well elicit anew the exclamation of one of the Fathers of the Church, *O testimonium animæ naturaliter Christianæ!*

The supremacy therefore of the Principle of Love in our nature may be taken as one of those truths which form the axioms of moral and religious thought. However vaguely apprehended, it would be disputed by few; and we may safely take it as a starting point, whether for religious meditation or for theological reasoning. But the more this supremacy is admitted, the more important becomes the enquiry as to what it involves; and it is to this that the following observations would now direct attention. We may observe, then, that love is essentially a personal relation. The word may, indeed, be used loosely of our mere liking for inanimate or impersonal objects; it may be degraded to express an animal passion. But all such uses of the word are either abuses of its meaning or are figurative. As the modern poet of chivalry has exquisitely expressed it: "True love's the gift which God has given to man alone beneath the heaven;" it is "the tie, which heart to heart, and mind to mind, in body and in soul can bind." The discriminating genius of the Greek language has marked the absolute difference of this love from the lower forms of passion by assigning special



words to each ; and there are some who have regretted that no similar distinction has been maintained in our own language. But, we may perhaps be permitted to think, there is another point of view from which the absence of any such verbal distinction may appear prompted by a true instinct in a Christian nation. It was necessary for a Greek to recognize sensual passion as one form of human relationship. But the Christian best expresses the lofty ideal which is ever before his eyes, and best exemplifies that charity which thinketh no evil and which believeth all things, by refusing to contemplate men and women as united by any lower tie than that of love, or by refusing to contemplate our lower nature except in the light shed upon it by the higher. At all events, it is something to be reminded, by the very language we use, that nothing deserves the name of Love which cannot also claim the designation of Charity. Love is thus the highest relation which one personal being can assume towards another ; and it seems necessary to insist upon this characteristic in it, because, in many of those general phrases to which I have adverted, its true nature is obscured by its association with mere abstractions. It is not with humanity but with human beings, that love is concerned ; and such mere intellectual abstractions are only useful, so far as they assist us in placing ourselves in that individual relation to individuals in which love finds its existence and its sphere of action. That which the Apostle has in view in his glowing description of this virtue is not a vague emotion of the heart, but the self-sacrifice, the devotion, the patience which are evoked in one soul by the presence of another. The description springs out of the contemplation of Christians, in the preceding Chapter, as being all members of one body ; and this close personal relation is borne in mind throughout. The charity which suffers long and is kind, which is not easily provoked, which thinks no evil, which bears all things, believes all things,

hopes all things, endures all things, is concerned at every turn with some other soul, weaker or stronger, as the case may be; and it is towards this individual soul, in its weakness or in its overweening strength, not towards any general idea, nor even, in the first instance, towards the whole society, that charity finds its exercise. A loose and inaccurate way of speaking about Love is not unfrequently heard, as though it were some product or quality of the individual heart which overflowed towards others; and the error, subtle as it may at first seem, is apt to lead to the gravest obscurity in its development. If we desired to explain the law of gravitation, it would, if I mistake not, be very inaccurate and misleading to speak of matter in general as exerting some attractive force. The only correct mode of stating the law is to say that any one portion of matter in relation to any other portion is subject to a certain attraction or pressure. Similarly, love cannot be properly described as a general quality of the human heart. It is the moral and spiritual force which is evoked between two hearts and two persons; and, like gravitation, it varies with the relative position and character of the two.

Now let us consider whether, if these observations, simple as they may seem when pointed out, be borne in mind, they do not throw some valuable light on the method and character of the Gospel. It would appear to follow from them that the degree in which this gracious virtue of love can be evoked in our nature must depend upon the personal relations in which we are placed. The relation, perhaps, may be sometimes and in some measure an ideal one; but the vision of a person must be brought before the soul, if its highest faculties are to be aroused and its noblest emotions drawn forth. We all know, and it is the privilege of a generous youth to feel with peculiar vividness, what an ennobling effect is produced upon our nature by love, in the true sense of the word, thus aroused towards a kindred

soul; while we also know and feel how intimately and essentially this influence is dependent on the personal character of the relation. It was the favourite theme of our greatest poets in the most splendid period of our literature, and perhaps of our national life; and in Spenser's lofty verse the Vision of Love and Beauty, and the Vision of Heavenly Love and Beauty, are so closely associated that they seem to merge into one another. But poets of less spiritual flight, and more concerned with the ordinary passions of human nature, have similarly depicted their heroes as rising to their noblest heights under the inspiration of this generous passion. When St. Paul discerns in the true relation of husband and wife a picture of the relation of Christ to his Church, he justifies and sanctifies these transcripts from nature, and welds together in essential union the most human and the most divine aspect of love. Where, indeed, even in the light of the Gospel, shall we find more touching illustrations of some of the excellencies which the Apostle ascribes to charity, than in the personal affections of a gracious family life? The love which suffers long and is kind, which envies not, which seeks not her own, which is not easily provoked, which thinks no evil, which bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things,—is not this the love of mothers and of wives, the devotion of true sons and husbands? What an astonishing power is there in such love and such devotion to suppress the selfishness in a man or a woman, and to arouse all the faculties of our nature in the service of the person to whom we are devoted!

But when we remember that in all this play and development of energy, it is the personal devotion to the person upon which the whole depends, a further question suggests itself. That question is, whether all these stirrings of heart towards men like ourselves, all these quickenings of the moral and spiritual pulse can be more than the first awakenings of the

human soul towards its true destiny—that of communion and union with a perfect Person. With respect to all these emotions, even the truest and most beautiful, when viewed independently of higher relations, in how lamentable a degree is illusion blended with them! Those illusions are often the mockery—the cruel and unworthy mockery—of maturer years: and they are not less often the bitter disappointments of tender and faithful hearts. But suppose a love open to human nature which should be subject to no such illusion; imagine a Person revealed to men and women on whom they could lavish the inexhaustible stores of their affection, their admiration, their devotion, and be sure that all, and more than all, would fall short of what was due, and be a feeble response to the infinite reality: and what might not then be expected to be the influence produced upon our nature? You have the answer in this Chapter, which was, in fact, the response elicited from the soul of St. Paul by the vision of the Lord Jesus Christ, by the love of the Saviour for him and his responsive love for the Saviour. It is essential for us to remember, if we would enter into the spirit of such passages, that they are prompted by a sense of abiding communion with the abiding Incarnation of Love, in all its patience and gentleness. Again, we cannot too clearly bear in mind that there was nothing abstract in such a description. It is no catalogue of general principles. It is but an expansion of the exhortation in another Epistle: “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” “I live,” says the Apostle, at another time, “yet, not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Such was the personal source of the Apostle’s love, and such its personal character.

In other words, it seems to follow, if this view of the nature of Love, and of the intensely and supremely personal



character of our being be accepted, that the perfection of our nature is unattainable, and even inconceivable, unless there be some perfect Person, towards whom, and through whom, these great affections of the soul may be completely and unreservedly developed. You cannot touch the deepest chords of the human heart, you cannot evoke its full harmonies, by any other influence than this. It is not merely our happiness, but—if that be deemed unworthy of mention, it is our powers and faculties, our energies for the highest purposes of life, which must depend for their fullest development upon the animating and harmonizing influence of love. It is this alone which can enable us to bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things; it is this alone for which no hyperbole is too strong; this alone which leads from childish things to the full maturity of manhood. How is this love to be perfected, how is it to be secured against the most bitter disillusion, unless there be a perfect Person towards whom it can be directed, and in whom and through whom it can be exercised towards others? For, if it be impossible to love perfectly any one but a perfect person, it would seem not less difficult to discern upon what other ground the unbounded love, the unrestricted devotion, inculcated in this Chapter and elsewhere towards all men is to be adequately supported. It does not seem to follow on mere principles of reason that all the individuals of the same race are members one of another. It is not so with any other race besides our own; and some plausible reasons, and some very strong sentiments might be, and have been, adduced against it. The truth may, perhaps, be deducible from principles of natural reason; but the argument would be hardly so apparent or so forcible as to constitute a very urgent motive. In point of fact, St. Paul does not base it on any such principle, nor do other inspired teachers. They base it upon the common relation of human souls to one eternal

Person, who is, and has always been, present to every one of them, who loves them with a personal love, and to whom their own love is due. "Ye," says the Apostle, in the Verses immediately preceding, "are the body of Christ, and members in particular." This is the sacred relation which secures for all other relations a permanent standing ground and an adamant bond. If Christ be related to other men in a manner similar, even if differing in degree, to that in which He is related to ourselves, then we are bound to each one of them in exact proportion to our union with Him, and in the same proportion shall we exhibit his spirit or his love towards them.

In short, on these principles, whether for our own individual perfection or for the perfect development of universal love towards men, the existence of a perfect Person, with whom we are all in communion, seems indispensable. Such perfection, indeed, may seem a high aim for a human spirit to set before itself; but perfection, or at least blessedness, in some form or other, has been proved by experience to be the ineradicable desire of the soul of man. That desire may, indeed, be dulled for a time, or chilled by despair. But such an acquiescence in imperfection brings with it, like the disappointed philosophy of the ancient world, a decay of energy, an abandonment of hope, in every sphere of life, and relaxes the spring of all noble thoughts and emotions. "Be ye perfect" is a command which is implied in all others, and is one of their main animating motives; and, in offering the means for this perfection, the Gospel possesses one of its deepest claims upon our spirits.

Accordingly, the whole course of the Divine Revelation may be regarded, in one aspect, as the gradual unveiling to the human spirit of a Person who should respond to this ultimate and essential demand of human nature; while the fall or the rise, the growth or the corruption, of men has depended upon the degree in which they have welcomed

these successive gleams of personal light and love, and have clung to the Divine Being who was thus appealing to their innermost souls. The weakness which led to the first fall described in the Scriptures lay above all in a feeble apprehension of the authority and character of God, and a consequent doubt as to the reality and the certainty of his command. The first great step upwards, on the part of Abraham, is a recovery of the vision of this Divine Being, a recognition of his voice and a personal faith in his promise. "The Lord appeared unto Abraham and said, I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect, and I will make my covenant between Me and thee." Thenceforward the education proceeds by means, on the one side, of personal words—of command, of exhortation, of rebuke, or of comfort—from this personal God; and, on the other side, by acts of personal faith, rising gradually into a clearer hope, and in the more favoured spirits bursting into a flame of ardent love. The description which the Apostle gives of the Gospel is true of the whole revelation which had preceded it, and of which it is the completion:—"Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, the just shall live by faith." At length this divine vision of grace and truth, which at sundry times and in divers manners had illuminated the souls of patriarchs and prophets, was made flesh and dwelt among us, and men beheld the glory of the only begotten Son of the Father. Then, accordingly, for then only was it possible, Love assumed a prominence and a supremacy in the hearts of men over all other powers and graces. The word "love" starts suddenly in the New Testament into a new importance, and becomes the key-word of apostolic thought.

Such a result follows naturally from the principles we have been considering, and is at once explained by them. Love starts into this sudden life and this intense energy, because for the first time a Person was fully revealed who could

awaken this most personal of all emotions. It is true, the law had from early times been summed up in the command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." But the Lord of whom this command spoke was still shrouded in too awful and too dim a garb to awaken in any but the greatest souls a free and spontaneous response of love. Clouds and darkness were round about Him, righteousness and judgment were the habitation of his seat; and accordingly it is faith and hope which are the dominant emotions of the Old Testament. "These," says the sacred writer, as he concludes the glorious summary of the *Acta Sanctorum* under the old covenant, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises," not having been vouchsafed a vision of those gracious lineaments, nor having heard those gracious words, which revealed to the soul of man the immediate presence of its God and its Saviour. "The law," says St. John, "was given by Moses, but grace and truth"—the qualities which are the food of love—"came by Jesus Christ." Such has been the history from first to last—the history of the revelation of a Person, and of the awakening in human souls of the emotions which such a Person can alone call forth. The redemption of man begins with faith, and proceeds through hope, and ends in love, until all is summed up in the matured conviction of the last Apostle that "God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

Such is the glorious, but at the same time simple, revelation which the Gospel opens to us. It is not a philosophy; it is not a law; it is not a theosophic speculation. It is the incarnation, and through the incarnation, the revealing, of a Person for whom personal souls are craving. I know not how far Christian divines are responsible for having obscured, by too presuming a spirit of rational speculation, this essential characteristic of the Gospel. But it is cer-



tainly marvellous how the sceptical philosophy of our times seems to regard Christianity as simply an elaborate scheme of mysterious doctrines on subjects beyond human ken. Many of those doctrines, as, for instance, the Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity, are indeed the necessary intellectual results, and therefore the necessary intellectual conditions, of the acceptance of certain cardinal facts. But if we would hold fast for ourselves the truths of our Faith, if we would meet the difficulties which are pressed upon us from without, and if we would assist others in encountering them, we cannot too diligently bear in mind that, in the revelation of the Gospel, the one essential and primary fact is that it reveals a Person, and that towards that Person it claims from us the homage of faith, of hope, and of love. There are, indeed, infinite mysteries in his relations to us—how could it be otherwise when there are such mysteries in our relations to each other?—and great injustice would be done by any disparagement of the laborious efforts of Fathers, Reformers, and Theologians to trace, with reverence and with patience, the laws of those mysterious relations. But the grand and simple facts exist independently of such explanations, and form the basis on which all doctrines must be built. It is this which renders the Gospel, notwithstanding its infinite depth and mystery, a revelation which, in its essential elements, can be grasped by the simplest soul. Little as we know of our mental and bodily constitution, we know that we can love and trust; and these also are the simple and natural qualities to which the Gospel appeals. It reveals the presence in our midst of three Divine Persons, full of grace and truth, and the moment we yield them the faith, the hope, and the love which are their due, and which, when they are really seen, they cannot fail to arouse—that moment the soul of a man is redeemed and his salvation is begun. In a word, it is admitted, nay, even asserted, as I observed at the outset, by those who reject our Faith, that love

is the very bond of peace and of all other virtues. That is an essentially Christian doctrine, and to the influence of the Gospel its prevalence is probably due. We only call on men to admit within this sphere of love those three Divine Persons whom the Gospel reveals, and to allow their hearts the blessing, not merely of affection and devotion to one another, but of communion with the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and with the love of God, and of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Such are the truths in the mind of the Apostle as he concludes his praise of Charity in the familiar words:—"Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." It is characteristic of him to be clinging to the vision of that which alone is permanent amidst the transitory scenes of the world. "We know," he says elsewhere, "that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." But what is this eternal home and refuge of the soul? It is found in one reality alone—one which seemed at the time to the world at large, and is too apt to seem even at the present day, the slightest and least permanent of all realities. It is found in a Person, it is revealed in a Man. What a strange dream it was to the natural eye for the Apostle to contemplate, as in this passage, the vanishing away of everything except the person of Christ! Prophecies, tongues, knowledge, and with knowledge the whole material world in which knowledge finds its sphere, vanishing away, and nothing remaining but the central person of the crucified Lord and our personal spirits around Him, still offering Him the homage of faith, hope, and love, and still reflecting that grace of love towards one another. A natural feeling has constantly arisen in the minds of those who contemplate the heavens, the work of the Divine fingers, the moon and the stars which He has ordained, that man is too insignificant a creature to evoke

those displays of the Divine love and grace of which our Faith speaks. Some feeling of that kind is probably at the root of many difficulties felt by thoughtful men of science at the present day. It is a feeling which can only be counteracted by concentrating our hearts and thoughts on those displays of the heights and depths of personal life and love which the Scriptures reveal. In that contemplation we may gradually learn, with the Apostle, to feel that the relative greatness and permanence of the soul of man and of nature are precisely the reverse of that which is apparent to the natural eye. "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three," because these fragile personalities of ours, in their relation to one eternal Person, and through Him to all others, are the only realities which will survive the consummation of the ages and the destruction of worlds. It seems to be almost an anticipation of the scientific vision of the present day when another Apostle depicts the very heavens as passing away with a great noise and the elements melting with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, being burned up. But there will abide, through all, the Sun of the moral and spiritual world, and the saints, "like stars," performing their course around Him. In the presence of this abiding vision how unworthy become the attractions—in proportion as it is realized, how impotent the temptations of this transitory world!

HENRY WACE.

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### BRIEF NOTICES.

THE EVANGELICAL REVIVAL, AND OTHER SERMONS. *By R. W. Dale, M.A.* (London: Hodder and Stoughton.) Wholesomer sermons than these it is almost impossible to conceive. Mr. Dale's preaching has always been remarkable for moral energy and fervour; but here this characteristic rises to its highest power. His words positively burn; you can feel the warmth of them as you turn the page, so swift and intense is the moral force which impels

them. In listening to Mr. Dale, too, one never thinks of him as a *minister* discharging an official function, saying what he *ought* to say; but rather as a broad-minded large-hearted layman who speaks because he *must* utter the thoughts that rise within him. And this characteristic of his teaching is as obvious in these discourses as the fervent moral energy which animates them. His speech is that of a devout statesman rather than that of the clerical orator.—so broad is his view of human life, so large his tolerance of the manifold forms which human thought and character assume. It may be doubted, indeed, whether the views of Christian truth which he urges as new are so new as he takes them to be, and whether the Church has fallen so far away from its old allegiance as he sometimes assumes; but no one can doubt that the preacher himself has received a new and deeper sense of the sins and wants of men, and of the power of the truth as it is in Jesus to satisfy their wants and to save them from their sins: for more conspicuously than ever he is a preacher of righteousness, and of that “righteousness of God which, by their faith in Jesus Christ, is unto all and upon all them that believe”; and more earnestly than ever he beseeches men to accept that righteousness and make it their own. If the spirit that breathes and burns in these nobly toned sermons could but be kindled in all our churches, the world would be won forthwith, and the will of God be done on earth even as it is done in heaven.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH. *By Rev. Henry Wace, M.A.* (London: Pickering and Co.) In this Bampton Lecture Mr. Wace fully maintains the very high reputation he won by his recent Boyle Lecture (“Christianity and Morality,”) as an interpreter and apologist of the Christian Faith. His argument is that faith has its roots in the conscience. In man’s deep sense of sin, and in that fearful looking for of judgment which is awakened in every unsophisticated mind by conscious moral failure and defect, he finds the rudiments of a belief both in the God who judges the thoughts and ways of men, and in a future life in which the righteous judgments of God will be carried out. To this rudimentary religious faculty the supernatural revelation of the redeeming righteousness of God makes its appeal; by this it is authenticated and confirmed. And the conscience, which thus authenticates the revelation of the righteous will of God, must be capable of interpreting it, or at



least of judging between conflicting interpretations. The man who must believe in God and in a Divine revelation before he can be so much as asked to believe in a church or a priest, cannot be dependent on priest or church for a knowledge of that Will.

This is a very brief and naked statement of the main argument of this very able book; but even from this it will be seen that Mr. Wace wields a two-edged sword, and confronts priest and sceptic alike. Revelation meets the wants and yearnings of which universal man is conscious; it is grounded in human nature, rooted in the human conscience: and those to whom it has been authenticated by the inward voice and the demands of their own moral nature cannot and will not mistrust it at the suggestion of a scepticism which overlooks or neglects those demands; while, on the other hand, faith in a Divine revelation implies in those who exercise it a power to handle and interpret truth which they cannot reasonably be asked to submit to the mere dictates of any authority that claims to be the sole judge of what men are to believe. The argument is very simple and effective; the more effective because it is so simple. But if our readers would see with what grace and power it may be wielded, with what delicate and suggestive criticism it may be embroidered, and how keen the polemic thrusts which may be delivered with it, they must read these masterly Lectures for themselves; in which nothing, save the conduct of the main argument, is more masterly than the grave penetrating rebukes administered to Mr. Matthew Arnold's supercilious patronage of the inspired writers, and to the crude self contradictory assumptions of the author of "Supernatural Religion."

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES. *By Franz Delitzsch, translated by S. J. Curtiss.* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark.) Professor Curtiss, of Chicago College, U.S., has induced Professor Delitzsch to allow him to use as a handbook for his students the notes of Lectures delivered by the well known German commentator at Leipsic University, in the winter of 1879-80. These "notes" compose the volume before us. To all who can use them they will be very welcome; for Dr. Delitzsch combines a sincere faith in revelation with a deep sense of the impossibility of mastering its contents except by a devout and scientific study of the Scriptures to a remarkable degree. And to few scholars is the special subject of Messianic prophecy more familiar, or even so familiar as to him.

Not only has he studied the special Scriptures which relate to it for many years, and with the insight into their meaning which can only be acquired by as thorough a knowledge of the whole Bible as can well be attained: but he has also acquainted himself with all that even the most recent scholars have written upon it. As a handbook for students, therefore, these brief notes are of great value. But I must warn the general reader, innocent of Hebrew and of scientific methods of study, that this book is not for him. Dr. Delitzsch's critical hints must be weighed, his references investigated, his suggestions developed, before their true value can be recognized.

“HOW READEST THOU?” A Series of Practical Expositions and Thoughts. *By Rev. F. B. Procter, M.A.* (London: Hodder and Stoughton.) These are very simple sermons, and obviously spring from an honest and good heart; but they are not very wise, nor are they marked by any kind of power, by expository power least of all. They betray indeed a singular incapacity for grasping any great subject, or for pursuing any method strictly, or for doing justice to those who hold other and opposite views. Thus, for example, on page 19, Mr. Procter, with an appearance of scientific method, lays down the indispensable qualifications of a true witness: (1) that he must speak only of what he knows, (2) that he must be competent and reliable; and yet in the same short paragraph so utterly departs from the very appearance of scientific method as to cite the testimony of the Witness to his own qualifications! A still more conspicuous instance of this weakness of grasp may be found in his sermon on “the restitution of all things.” In refuting the teaching of those who hold that phrase to cover the final restoration of all souls to the Maker and Lover of us all, he is content to say that “even the most superficial reader will not fail to discover that under such a supposition ‘repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,’ the two indispensable conditions of salvation, are left out of consideration altogether!” Yet who that holds the larger hope has ever doubted that, if all souls are to be saved, they must be led to repentance and faith, by whatever severities of discipline may be necessary? Those at whom Mr. Procter aims maintain, at least as earnestly as he does himself, that to be in sin *is* to be damned, and that from this damnation no soul of man can be saved except by the repentance and faith through which God cleanses him

from his sin and makes him righteous. So incompetent is he to handle this great argument that he can even print the sentence: "Let us not then be led away by this plausible doctrine of a *universal restoration* of those who live and die in impenitence. 'There is a sin unto death,' a sin 'which shall never be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come.' If not forgiven *now*, nor THEN, WHEN?" And with all this pomp of emphasis, and though this is the only text he quotes in favour of his conclusion, a conclusion for which so much might be said, it never occurs to him to refer to the Greek of his proof text, or to admit that, to say the least, a possible rendering of the phrase on which he relies is, "shall not be forgiven either in this *age* or in the next age to this!" Nay, more, he goes on to argue that "the restitution of all things" points to a time "when *all creation shall be harmonized*," yet never apprehends the immense difficulty of holding that even the inanimate creation must be redeemed from its bondage to vanity and corruption, while the animate creation, or a vast proportion of it, is to be left in that doleful bondage. A "shipwreck" would, he feels, be a fatal discord in the final harmony, but not a *sinner*, nor even a whole world full of sinners hating God, and plunged in an agony to which death by drowning, or even death by fire, would be Paradise itself!

It is no part of our function here to advocate either the broader or the narrower interpretation of the Scriptures which adumbrate the future estate of the wicked; but it is every man's duty to hold the balance even, and if he touches this difficult and momentous question at all, to handle it fairly and with at least a fair show of competence: and certainly it is the duty of a reviewer to point out that arguments founded on a dubious exegesis, or so illogical as to be self-contradictory, only injure the cause they are adduced to serve.

I HAVE just received one of the most charming books ever issued from the English press. It is a copy of the OXFORD BIBLE FOR TEACHERS (London: Oxford University Press Warehouse). This Bible is Bible, Commentary, Concordance, and Atlas, all in one. It has long been the rival of the "Teacher's Bible" published by Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode, and has run it very hard. It now seems likely to run right away from it, and leave it panting in the rear; for, while the literary contents of the two are very much on

a level, there can be no doubt that in all that relates to the *form* of the book—paper, type, binding, etc.,—the Oxford Bible is very much ahead of its competitor. Of the great value of its contents I have already spoken (Vol. IX., *First Series*), and need add only a few sentences on its rare attractiveness of outward form. The edition of which I have received a copy is known to the trade, I believe, as *Minion Size, Thin*. It is printed on a paper made of the “hardest parts of unbleached linen”—a paper so thin that 1300 pages of it do but measure one inch across, and yet so opaque that the impression does not show through the page, and so tough that it cannot easily be torn. It is bound in limp calf of a lovely gold-brown colour, silk lined; and its covers have no lettering on side or back save the words “Holy Bible” in pure gold. No book could well be more pleasant to look at, or to handle, or to read. And this charming book is enclosed in a solid case of calf, of the same colour with the binding, with a lock of the same colour as the lettering. It is a most dainty dish to set before an Editor. And though, of course, an edition so beautiful must be costly,—the price of my copy is forty shillings, to which, I suppose, at least a guinea must be added for the case,—yet it is produced in many forms much less expensive and hardly less comely. In fine, the whole edition is characterized by singular beauty and good taste.

A COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF JOB, WITH A NEW TRANSLATION. *By Samuel Cox.* (London: C. Kegan Paul and Co.) For obvious reasons my books are not reviewed in this Magazine. But I may be permitted to announce that the exposition of “Job” which appeared in the *first series* of the *Expositor* has now been published in a separate and handsome form. Though I have revised it once more, it remains substantially the same. I have added hardly anything to it, but have gladly corrected two or three errors into which I had slipped, and cut out now and then certain “modern instances” which it did not seem worth while to perpetuate. Those who possess the *first series* of this Magazine really possess, though in a less convenient form, the book which has just appeared. They will be glad to hear, I think, that the exposition which is in their hands has received, since it was published in book form, the cordial *imprimatur* of some of the best Hebraists both in the English and the Scotch universities, and has been very generously and favourably reviewed in some of our ablest critical journals. *The Pall*



*Mall Gazette*, for example, says :—" This volume gives in a collected shape papers which have appeared during some years past in the *Expositor*, and which have excited the attention, and we may add the admiration, of all who studied them. No more thoughtful and able discussion of any book of Scripture has lately appeared in this country. The translation is excellent, felicitously giving clearness to the authorized version without any diminution of its dignity. The argument of Job and the interlocuters in the dialogue—an argument which is not by any means obvious—is admirably set forth. Mr. Cox belongs to the conservative school of critics, attributing the authorship of the book to the reign of Solomon, while he finds the scene of the story in the Hauran in North-Eastern Syria."

INDICES TO THE EXPOSITOR. *First Series*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton.) I have just said that my works are not reviewed in these pages. And yet here is one which I must notice, and one which in a certain sense I hold to be my greatest work, since it has assuredly taxed my patience most severely. Nothing can be more tedious than the making of an index. And I have just had to make a triple index for Volumes I. to XII. of this Magazine, which has cost me a fortnight's work of the dullest and most exacting kind, in collecting, marshalling, and verifying a multitude of minute facts and figures. This Index covers three sheets, and contains an index of Authors, an index of Subjects, an index of Texts. It has been put into cloth covers, and issued in a separate form, for more convenient use. The demand for an Index of this kind has been so general, and of late so loud, that I have been compelled to prepare it. I trust it will be found to be accurate and serviceable. Prudent and forecasting subscribers, remembering that books often handled soon wear out, will order two copies, since in a little time it will be out of print. I have found it convenient already, not only because it saves the labour of hunting through several volumes for the article of which one is in search, but also because it indicates where one may find an important subject—Prayer, for example—treated in many different ways by many different hands. And those who have not had the trouble of making it will, I hope, be able to use it with more pleasure than it can ever give to

THE EDITOR.

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## *THE FIRST PSALM.*

### 1. THE AUTHOR OF THE PSALM.

No Scripture of the Old Testament is dearer to the Christian heart than that which contains the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs of the Hebrew Church. And yet, familiar as the Psalter is to us, and though we set so high a value upon it, for want of a scientific acquaintance with its contents, much of its beauty and force are lost even to those of us who love it most. Happily it is quite possible for good men to get much good, and even the purest spiritual good, from inspired writings with which they have no critical acquaintance; but those who are most independent of the aids of criticism are precisely those who are most thankful for them: those who habitually find spiritual nutriment in the Psalms will be the first to welcome whatever casts new light upon them or evolves new meaning from them. A man, as he strolls through field and copse, may take the sincerest delight in the beauty and fragrance of the wild flowers which spring beside his path, although he be ignorant of their very names and quite unable to distinguish the one from the other by their differences of structure and habit; but if he master the rudiments of botanical science, if he acquaint himself with their names, seasons, habitats, if he learn to mark the specialties of structure by which they are related and differenced, he will both be apt to discover them where he had not been wont to find them, and be sure to have his interest in them greatly enhanced. And it is thus with the reader of Scripture. Any thoughtful and devout man may find spiritual teaching and refreshment in the Psalms,

for instance, although he be ignorant of the very rudiments of historical and literary criticism ; but let him master those rudiments, nay, let him only have the results of learned and sympathetic criticism placed within his reach, and these flowers of inspired song will take a new interest and an added beauty in his eyes, and disclose charms and meanings he had not recognized in them before.

Let us take as an illustration the very first psalm in the Psalter, not because it is by any means a favourable illustration, but because it is a familiar and therefore a convenient one. The first question we ask about it is, Who wrote this Psalm? A simple question enough, and yet, apparently, an unanswerable question. For the Psalm has no superscription. No one of the inspired writers either claims it for himself or attributes it to any of his brethren. And yet how much depends on the authorship ! If we know who wrote a song, the character of the writer largely helps us to the meaning of his words. If we know *who* wrote a song, we know approximately *when* it was written ; and the spirit and conditions of the age in which he lived go far to interpret what he wrote. And this is just as true of inspired as of any other songs ; for, though the truth of God is one and the same in all ages, yet He reveals that one unchanging truth in many forms, adapting its forms to the needs and capacities of the age to which it is addressed. Not only did the one Divine truth take very different forms in times so far apart as those of Moses and of Christ ; there is an amazing difference in its forms even in times so near to each other and so closely related as those of David and Solomon, as we see the moment we compare Solomon's proverbs with David's psalms. In point of time there is but a single generation between them ; and yet how vast is the interval between them both in substance and in style !

We may be sure, therefore, that if we could answer the question, Who wrote the first Psalm? if we could thus

determine its date as well as its authorship, the answer would largely help us in reading and interpreting the Psalm.

Must we, then, give up all hope of obtaining a help so valuable? By no means. So long, indeed, as we come to the study of Holy Writ in a reflective and devout mood, there is hardly any question to which we should despair of finding an answer, if that answer will be really helpful to us. And as for *this* question, there is an answer to it, so probable as to be almost certain, at the service of any reader who will be at the pains of looking for it. Indeed I know of few better exercises to which a novice in the study of the Word could be put than that of discovering this answer for himself. The facts on which it rests are not recondite; it tasks no scholarship to reach them, requires nothing but a little thought and observation; and, though the evidence is circumstantial rather than direct, it lies on the very surface of the Psalm, and may be found by any who will but seek it.

It is with the hope of shewing the ordinary reader how, simply by using his own brain and heart on facts either perfectly familiar to him or well within his reach, he may find new meaning and new interest in many Scriptures, that I proceed to indicate the chain of cumulative evidence and the simple and obvious course of reasoning by which the authorship of this Psalm is determined, and its verses are made to grow more significant.

1. The first point to be borne in mind is that, though the Psalter seems to be but one book, it really consists of *five* books, five successive collections of poems or hymns, which were given to the world—edited and published, as we should say—at five periods widely removed from each other. Each of these books closes, both in the English and the Hebrew Bibles, with a doxology, and is thus divided from that which follows it. By these doxologies we know where one book ends and another begins. The first book was probably



“published” in the reign of Solomon; the second and third not till the time of Hezekiah; the fourth and fifth not till after the captivity in Babylon. So that, instead of being a single book, by a single author, published by him in his lifetime, the Psalter is really a collection of five “books of praise,” to each of which various authors contributed, and was published at various dates extending over five or six hundred years. Of this general fact there is no doubt, whatever diversities of opinion may obtain on other facts, or on the details of this fact, among the critics of different lands and ages. Neither in the synagogue nor in the church is there any authority which denies the Psalter to be five successive collections of psalms made at different dates, from that of Solomon to that of the return from the Captivity. Indeed both the Jewish and the Christian commentators have long harped on the fact that, as in the Hebrew law there are five books (what we call the Pentateuch), so in the Hebrew hymnal there is also a pentateuch, a fivefold songful response to the law that came by Moses.

And this undisputed fact helps us thus. The first Psalm has always been regarded as the prologue, preface, introduction, both to the first book, and to the whole Psalter. If then the Psalter, whether by the wisdom of God or by the device of man, is a fivefold response to the fivefold Law, what should we naturally expect to be the subject, the theme, of the very first Psalm, the psalm which introduces all the rest? What, but the very Law, or the praise of that very Law, to which the whole Psalter is a songful response? This is its theme. It sings the happy lot of the man who loves and keeps the Divine law; and contrasts with his happy lot the miserable doom of the man who breaks and scorns that law. And, surely, if the Psalter was intended to be a songful response to the Law, and to shew us how to make God’s statutes our songs, no theme could be more appropriate than this. It strikes the keynote,

and gives the *motif*, of the grand and complex chorus which follows it.

2. The first book of the Psalter begins with Psalm i. and ends with Psalm xli., at the close of which we have the doxology: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting: Amen and Amen." Now this first collection or book consists, with only four exceptions, of Psalms attributed to David. Of the four anonymous psalms contained in it, our psalm is one. And the conclusion at which the critics have arrived is the very simple and reasonable one,—that whoever edited the first collection of David's psalms also wrote the psalm with which it opens, as a sort of editorial preface or introduction to all that came after it.

Who was this editor? Think. If the first collection of David's poems was published during the reign of Solomon, whom should we select as the most likely man to collect and give them to the world? We should select a poet; for who so fit as a poet to edit poems? We should select a man who was attached to the service of the temple, and bent on augmenting the splendour and charm of its liturgy and ritual, since *he* would feel a special and profound interest in the hymns that were to be introduced, or had been introduced, into its worship. We should select a man who loved David, and who therefore would spare no pains in collecting and publishing his poems in their most perfect form.

Now if we had to select such a man as this from Solomon's court, whither should we turn, whom should we choose? Should we not turn to the throne itself, and say to him that sat on it, "*Thou* art the man, thou of all men, for this task"? Solomon was himself a poet. If "he spake three thousand proverbs," "his songs were a thousand and five." Solomon loved the temple which he had built, and the worship in which he himself took so conspicuous a part. And Solomon loved the father who had loved him and

preferred him before all his sons, and would, we may be sure, delight to do him honour and to keep his memory green by collecting his psalms for public use. In short, all the indications, all the probabilities, point to Solomon as the editor of the first book of Psalms, and therefore as the author of the Psalm which stands first in it and introduces it.

3. But are there any facts which confirm these probabilities? There are several facts, great and small.

Here, for instance, is a most weighty fact. The whole tone, the moral and spiritual tone, of the first Psalm is that of the period which scholars know as that of the *Chokmah*, the time in which the *proverbial* Scriptures were written; the age in which men expressed their conceptions of truth in wise saws, weighty aphorisms, well balanced sentences, witty epigrams, in apologues and compressed parables; the age of which Solomon himself was the crowning illustration and ornament. Such a style of thought and art denotes a time of peace, leisure, reflection: for it is only when men are at leisure from themselves, from the frets of care and doubt, from the stings of the stronger and more terrible passions, that they seek to crowd and crystallize the experience of a lifetime into portable and precious jewels of speech, and to polish them till they dazzle all eyes. The first Psalm is characterized by this sententious, epigrammatic, proverbial style. In its very form it is, as Dr. Perowne has pointed out, "little more than the expansion of a proverb." Its tone is calm and composed. There is no throb of passion in it, no struggle with the difficult and terrible problems of human life, no sense even of its haunting and insoluble mysteries. It breathes none of that despondency, that passionate questioning of the equity of Divine Providence, that despair of vindicating the ways of God to men, which were bred in David's heart as he was hunted through the hills and forests by Saul, and in the poets of the Captivity by the miseries of defeat, exile, and

hope deferred. The author's mind is as a quiet stream which clearly reflects in its bosom the tranquil shadows of a tranquil day. He is not agitated by doubt, nor torn by the struggle to reconcile his convictions with facts that seem to contradict them. He does not cry, "Why do the wicked prosper?" or, why are the righteous cast down?" He is quite sure that the wicked will *not* prosper, that in the hour of trial they will prove as chaff on the mountain threshing-floors swept by the mountain winds. He is equally sure that the good *will* prosper, that they will be as the tree whose roots are nourished by an ever flowing stream, whose leaf does not wither, whose fruit does not fail. And this is precisely that simple uncomplicated theory of human life which we find reflected from every page of the Book of Proverbs; according to which a man has but to be wise, morally wise that is, and all will be well with him, and only foolish, *i.e.* bad, to come to a bad end. A theory so simple, so unqualified, which takes no note of the delays of Providence and the defeats of hope, in which the moral colours are not differentiated, but all things are either black or white, is possible only in a simple and tranquil time. Solomon, in the peaceful prosperous years with which his reign opened, and before the mournful shadows of doubt, bred of his tyranny and vices, which clouded his later years had darkened over him, may have held such a theory to be an adequate expression of his experience; but David, taught to think more largely by the troubled and turbulent life by which he was trained, would have found such a theory wholly inadequate, as would also those later Psalmists who saw their holy and beautiful city laid waste or were commanded to sing the Lord's songs in a strange land.

Here, then, is a new and grave reason for attributing the first Psalm to the Wise King. In form it is little more than a proverb such as those by which we know him best; while in substance it is but an expression of that simple



unqualified theory of human life which we find in his acknowledged writings and hardly anywhere else, least of all perhaps in the facts of our personal experience.

4. Can we lay our hands on any other evidence? On much, and it all points steadily in the same direction, though henceforth we must be content with evidence of a more minute and delicate kind.

In Verse 1, for example, the good man is described as one who did not “sit in *the scorner’s seat*.” Now the Hebrew word here rendered “scorner,” which means a frivolous impudent person who scoffs at all that is sacred, is never once used in the whole Psalter except here; but in the Book of Proverbs it is in constant use. Indeed it is a Solomonic word, *i.e.*, a word characteristic of Solomon’s time. It is used once in the Book of Job (which was probably *written* in Solomon’s reign), and twice by Isaiah, who lived long after Solomon; but it occurs nearly a score of times in the Proverbs, and except in the first Psalm is not elsewhere to be found. So that from the fact that this word occurs here we may surely infer that the Psalm was not written before Solomon’s age, and that very probably it was written by Solomon himself: how else did one of his characteristic words get into it?

5. In Verse 2 we have the good man described as one who is “*wont to meditate*” in God’s law “day and night.” Now quiet meditative habits indicate quiet peaceful times. When war and tumult are in the land, it is hardly a good man’s part to bury himself in contemplation, however honourable the nature of his studies may be. When David summoned his followers to arms, he would hardly have accepted it as a valid excuse for absence that Joab, or Jashobeam, or Eleazar, or Abishai, or Benaiah had wandered off into the forest with “the book of the Law” in his hand, and had given strict orders that he was not to be disturbed in his pious seclusion. But in tranquil times,

such as those of the earlier and better years of Solomon, when every man "dwelt securely under his vine and under his figtree, none daring to make him afraid," a good man might habitually meditate on the Divine Law, and be honoured by the wise pacific king for his ardent pursuit of "wisdom." In short, the ideal of the Psalm was far more likely to be that of the later than of the earlier time, and suits no age of the Hebrew story so well as the tranquil, literary, scholastic age of Solomon.

6. There is another indication of authorship in this Psalm, the discovery of which is almost as curious as the evidence it yields. Mr. George Grove, whose interest in the geography and archæology of the Holy Land, and indeed in all that relates to the Hebrew Bible, is well known, when talking with an earnest student of the Word, suggested that Psalm i. must have been written by a man who either lived in Northern Palestine or was familiar with its scenery. For, said he, that image of the tree planted by the water-brooks, whose leaf does not wither because its roots are fed by a perpetual stream (Verse 3), would be far more likely to occur to one who knew the ever-flowing streams of the North than to an inhabitant of the South, where the streams only run in winter and are soon dried up. This, naturally, struck the Biblical student as a happy suggestion, and set him thinking; and the upshot of his thoughts was this. David's life was spent very mainly in the southern districts of the Holy Land, where the brooks are speedily dried up by the heat of the sun; but Solomon had his summer palace in Lebanon, and must therefore have often passed through Galilee, and have been familiar with the northern streams which, fed by the mountain snows, run all the year round and keep the trees on their banks always green.

Now if we bring all these different lines of evidence to a focus, to whom does their blended light point, if not to

Solomon? Solomon must, we are quite sure, have been familiar with the tree by the stream with its bright constant foliage, though David may never have seen one. In Solomon's peaceful times, though not in David's nor for any a year after Solomon's death, a quiet meditative habit, such as that described in the second Verse of the Psalm, might naturally be described as a feature of the man ideally good. From Solomon's lip or pen Solomon's habitual word for the insolent scoffer at sacred things might be expected to fall. From Solomon too we might naturally look to receive a psalm proverbial in form, in style, in tone, and which expresses the very theory of human life laid down in the pithy sentences and pictorial apologues of his best-known writings. And, above all, if, as the critics affirm with one consent, this first book of Psalms was edited and published in Solomon's time, and the first psalm in it was composed by the editor as a preface to the whole collection, who so likely to edit that Book and write this Psalm as Solomon himself who loved his father David and would be glad to shew him honour; who was set on improving the service of the Temple choirs; and who, as himself a poet, would be the very man to see that his father's poems were published in their true and perfect forms? Were I a lawyer, and had I to prove authorship, I should be glad to have so clear a case as *that*, and should make myself quite easy as to the verdict, if at least I were pleading before a competent and unbiassed judge.

## 2. THE THEME OF THE PSALM.

A PSALM, like a coin, may have an image though it have no superscription. This Psalm has no superscription which, telling us who wrote it, had thereby told us, at least in part, how to interpret it. Yet, if I am not much mistaken, we

have found the image of Solomon upon it, and can ourselves now furnish it with a superscription, which throws, as we have seen, no little light on its form, structure, tone, and the very illustrations it employs.

As for the theme of the Psalm, that is obvious enough. The good man and his fate, the bad man and his fate, in other words, the inevitable issues of moral conduct, this is the subject of the two vivid little word-pictures which Solomon paints.

First, we have *the good man* (Verses 1-3). He is set before us on the negative and on the positive sides of his character; we are told what he is not and what he is. On the negative side we are told that he does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful. The weaker sort of commentators are much impressed by the beauty of this first verse; but I doubt whether even they would have been so much impressed by it had they found it anywhere except in the Bible. There is a kind of climax in it indeed, a kind of literary feat; but the feat is a very simple one, belonging to the earlier stage of art; and surely it would not be difficult to match the climax from any author of good style. The happy or blessed man is he who does not *walk* in the way in which *restless and passionate men* habitually travel; still less does he take his *stand* once for all among *the habitual workers of iniquity*; and still less does he *sit down* content with the company of *the openly profane*, feeling himself at home with those who make a mock of sin. Three degrees of habit are indicated by the verbs "walk," "stand," "sit;" three degrees of evil by the nouns "wicked," "sinners," "scorners." Let us admit and admire the ingenuity and beauty of the verse, such as they are; but let us not claim more for the verse than it deserves, or go into raptures over it as over an unparalleled stroke of art. The writings of any real poet contain finer



passages than this; and the Bible so easily takes the first place in literature, and has so many rare and unexampled claims on our admiration, that of all books it least needs a forced or fictitious praise.

Of the positive side of the good man's character we are told that he delights in the law of Jehovah, and habitually meditates on it day and night. Not only does he withdraw from those whose evil communications might corrupt his good morals; not only does he yield the Divine law an outward deference and respect: he "delights in it after the inward man"; it is the food and aliment of his spirit as well as the rule of his life. He broods over it with a love which turns its statutes into his songs, and lifts his obedience to it into a happy freedom.

Shall not this good man have a good time? Yes; he shall be like the Galilean tree, which, when beneath a fervid Eastern sky all else is parched and barren, stands in the bright strip of verdure on the margin of a perennial stream, its foot in the cool flowing water, its leaves green, its fruit abundant. Now *that* is really very beautiful even to us; the image is beautiful, I mean, even if we doubt the thought to be true; but to an Oriental, whose very life often depended on these green oases, with their water, shade, fruit, it would be still more beautiful and impressive than it is to us.

Then (Verses 4, 5) we have *the bad man* and his fate. He is "not so"; *i.e.*, all that has been predicated of the good man is denied of him. He does *not* meditate on the law, nor delight in it. He *does* walk with the wicked, and stand with the sinner, and sit with the scornful. And therefore he is like the dry withered tree rather than the tree with water flowing through its roots. Nay, even the dry tree is not dry enough to express his utter fruitlessness and unworth. He is, rather, like the chaff of the mountain threshing-floors, flung up into the air, to be caught and

driven away by every passing wind. Because he stands with sinners he does not and cannot stand in the Divine judgment; the verdict must go against him. Because he sits with scornors he shall not sit down in the congregation of the righteous, with those true Israelites who compose the family of the Lord. The good man will carry through whatever he attempts (Verse 6); for the Lord "knoweth his way," and regards his course with watchful care and love, as how should He not when He Himself is both the good man's way and his goal? But the bad man will fail in all he attempts, fail so utterly that the very way he took shall perish; he reaches no goal, and his very path, as he advances, crumbles and drops from beneath his feet.

This, then, is the theme of the Psalm; and its charm is to be found not in any ingenious parallelism or artful climax, but in these fresh natural images of the tree thriving by the water-brooks and of the chaff vanishing before the wind.

But, poetry apart, what are we to say to this simple, antique, unqualified theory of human life? Surely no man can read the Psalm, however much he may admire it, without asking: "But is it *true*? Is it not at best a very partial and imperfect statement of the facts of human life?" If we have had any experience of men and of the turns of fortune's wheel, we cannot but have seen that the good do not always thrive: the stream often leaves their roots, their leaves often wither, their fruit often fails; they are very far from carrying through all that they attempt. We cannot but admit that the bad do not always come to a bad end, an end visibly and confessedly bad, at least in this world; instead of being as chaff, the sport of every wind, they are often so solidly and firmly planted that the very storms which sweep away the hopes of the good fail to uproot them. And as we compare these indisputable facts with the unhesitating and unqualified assertions of the

Psalm, we are sometimes tempted to cry: "It is a charming picture, a beautiful dream. Would that it were true! Would that all the chaff *were* swept from this fair world by some strong wind of God!"

But consider: if *all* the chaff were swept out of the world, where should *we* be? what would become of *us*? Even if we have something of the fruitful tree in us, have we not also much that can only be compared to the dry worthless chaff? Must we not admit, then, shall we not be forward to admit, that few men are wholly and only bad, that, even in the worst, virtues are strangely blended with their vices, so that even they cannot be said to provoke an instant and unqualified condemnation? When we begin to complain of the world, and of God's ordering of the world, we shall do well to ask ourselves how far *we* are responsible for much that goes amiss in it. We say, "Good does not always come to the good, nor evil to the evil," calmly assuming that, were that the law of the Divine Providence, only good would come to us; whereas, so soon as we reflect, we know well enough that we are not so wholly good as to deserve that only good should befall us, and confess with shame and penitence that we are responsible for no little of the evil within and around us. We say: "Ah, what a happy world it would be if only the good were left in it, and God were to do them good all day long!" calmly assuming that *we* should be left in it: but should we?

Before we sigh and complain over the inequalities of Providence, let us at least remember, first, that we ourselves are not wholly good, and cannot therefore expect to receive nothing but good at the hand of the Lord; and, second, that we so little know in what our real good consists as that much which seems evil to us may even be best for us. When the strong winds blow, shaking and bruising us, it may be that they come to blow away that in us which is worthless as chaff. When the cool sweet waters recede

from our roots, it may be in order that our roots may follow them, get a larger grip of the ground, and so enable us to face storms before which we should otherwise succumb.

But, again, if we judge human life fairly and according to our best convictions, we shall probably come to a conclusion similar to that of the Psalmist, and even identical with it, though we may not express it in so absolute and unqualified a form. We see many exceptions, or many apparent exceptions to the rule, but still we do hold it for a rule of life, that goodness thrives and reaches a good end, while badness languishes, tends to, and actually comes to, a bad end. By neither path perhaps do men reach their end *at once*, or soon. The ungodly, the sinner, and the scorner may swagger by us, and, with the world, the flesh, and the devil to help them, they may make a brave show for a time; but, if we watch them carefully, we shall see their "way" perishing behind and even under their feet, so that they cannot hark back even when they see the place of their torment before them, and can only with great labour and peril climb up into some better way. And, for a time, the good man, as he sits meditating on the law of the Lord, or delights to do his will with busy hand and eager foot, may see the world go by him, or hear its laugh of contempt, and feel lonely, hurt, forsaken. But has he lost so very much in losing the company, the smile and approval, of the world? Others grow rich, he keeps poor; others win reputation, he remains unknown; but if his character has been really formed by the Law in which he studies and delights, if in these brief hours of time he has really laid hold on eternal life, if he can smile at Fortune and her wheel because all changes, whether adverse or prosperous, bring him nearer to God, is he very much to be pitied for his loss? *What* has he lost after all? He has lost "the chaff," which is the sport of every wind, and which at last the wind of death must carry away. What has he gained? He has gained a



place by that stream of living waters which carries life, fertility, fruitfulness, wherever it flows. The man who is sincerely good grows ever better, while the man who is really bad grows ever worse. Goodness tends to *life* in its highest sense; and badness to *death* in its saddest sense.

In these terms, or such as these, we all, even the most sceptical of us, express the general conclusion to which our personal observation and experience of life have led us. Why, then, should not the Psalmist express his conclusion in similar terms? When there is need, or occasion, we qualify our general conclusion in various ways. We point out, for instance, that the connection between moral goodness and outward ease and success is by no means invariable; or we warn men that the painful results of bad actions and bad habits may not at once appear. And, in all probability, there were times when even Solomon himself felt that his general conclusion must be qualified in similar ways; nay, we know that there were such times, for in his other writings we often find him qualifying it, or even seeming to distrust it. But we should not expect to find the whole truth of Providence, in all its aspects and qualifications, compressed into so brief a Psalm as this, or indeed into any single scripture. It should be enough for us that the Psalm states one aspect of the truth in vigorous and attractive forms. And surely it is true that, on the whole, goodness is fruitful, wickedness barren; that goodness tends to life, wickedness to death. It is a truth on which we ourselves act so often as we refuse any pleasure or gain which can only be had by doing wrong, so often as we suffer pain or loss in order to do that which is right.

Least of all should this truth be questionable to those who hold the Christian Faith. For *our* view extends beyond the bounds of time. Even if we cannot see that the good, nourished by a living stream, prosper in this world

and are fruitful in proportion to their goodness, we nevertheless believe that in the better country and through the years of eternity whatsoever they do will prosper. Even if we are foolish enough to grudge the sinner the sinful indulgences by which he is degraded, we nevertheless believe that hereafter, when men are brought to the threshing floor, and He whose fan is in his hand shall thoroughly purge his floor, the wicked will prove to be but as chaff before the wind. While we are here, good and evil are so subtilly and strangely blended in our character that we cannot hope to enjoy an unmixed happiness. If good comes to us through our goodness, evil must come to us through our sins, that we may be chastened from them and compelled to renounce them. But hereafter, we hope to enter, by the grace of God, through a pure goodness, into a pure blessedness; and to become purely good is even more attractive to us than to be always happy. If, planted by the river of life, we may bring forth a little fruit, and ever more abundant fruit, fit for the use of God and man, we crave no higher blessedness. And this hope we may safely cherish if, conscious of much that is still weak and barren and evil in our nature, we are sincerely aspiring and endeavouring after goodness and usefulness and purity. The hope of a growing goodness and a growing fruitfulness we *have*, indeed, even now and here; for who so weak but that he may do a little good, and ever a little more? and amid all that is defective in our present service we have this great consolation and hope, that we look for better things in that better world in which we are to become what we would be, perfect in love and in all the fruits of love.

And yet, whether for purposes of argument or as a basis for our personal hopes, I doubt whether it is well to linger much or often on even this great and consolatory thought. Certainly we best vindicate the large moral conclusion of this Psalm as we fall back on the familiar conviction that

character is destiny ; and that hence, even now and here, a Divine justice is apparent in every human life.

It must be admitted, indeed, that that Justice does not take, in every life, the obvious and dramatic forms which it often took in ancient and simpler times, when men were not crowded together as they are now, and their several lots did really, and much more largely, depend on the presence or absence of the moral and industrial virtues. If honesty is still the best policy, and virtue its own reward, it must be confessed that honesty often fails to win houses and lands, and that virtue does not always force its way to honour and distinction. Under our present conditions many a rogue thrives, even to the day of his death ; and many an honest and good man is cabined and confined in narrow uncongenial circumstances, till he too lies down in the grave. It is still quite as difficult as it was in Paley's days to keep both a conscience and a carriage. It is only in a large rough way that men's conditions are adjusted to their characters. It is only as we look at them on a large scale, or in the long run, that we see men rewarded according to their deeds, according to their deserts. If we follow any man into eternity, or if we take into our view whole classes and nations of men—in which the sons may suffer for their fathers' sins, or profit by their virtues—we may see, if we will, that it is well with the good and ill with the bad. But to our impatience it often seems but cold comfort to hear that in eternity, if not in time, justice will be done ; to our selfishness it often seems no comfort at all that justice *is* done on a large rough scale, if, meantime, and to us individually, justice is not done. Nay, a bad selfish man may be quite content that the world at large should lose so that he may gain ; while the sceptic or unbeliever, or even the mere careless man of the world, may nerve himself to "jump the life to come," if only he may get his own way in the life that now is. What we most want therefore,

whether for the comfort of the righteous, or to convict and restrain the unrighteous, is the assurance, not that justice will be done, but that justice *is* done between man and man; not even that justice is done on a large scale, in the history of classes and communities, but that, by an inevitable and invariable necessity, justice enters into and moulds the lot of every man that breathes, whatever his class, whatever his race. Could we reach and hold fast such a conviction as this, we should do much more than vindicate the truth of our Psalm; we should go far towards removing the shadows from human life and justifying the ways of God with men.

Is then such an assurance as this within our reach? Within our reach! It is in our very hands the moment we consider human life and experience as a whole, and not merely in its constituent parts; the moment we take Plato's advice and "look within," instead of looking around us.

*Character* is destiny, not Fortune. That which is within a man really determines his lot, not the outward haps and mishaps of life. Our experience of life, and of the vast system of things in which we are placed, with all its good and ill, all its happiness and misery, is determined for every man by the kind of life to which he addicts himself. The life, the whole experience, of the man who delights himself in the Divine law is very different to that of the man who walks in the counsel of the ungodly, or stands in the way of sinners, or sits in the scorner's seat. The life of an honest man is very different from that of a rogue, that of a generous man from that of a churl, that of a kind man from that of a selfish man, that of a pure-minded man from that of an impure. Quite apart from the consequences of this life in the world to come, it has consequences here and now which set differences of the most vital kind between man and man. And "no confusion ever takes place"; the experience which belongs to one kind of man never falls to



the lot of another kind ; the impure man, for example, never gets the experience of the pure man. There is no flaw, no hitch, in the arrangements by which these different sorts of lives are kept as distinct from each other as different species of plants are, or different orders of animal life. In short, the law which determines what sort of experience every man shall have, and which affixes one set of results to one course of action and another to another, is as constant and invariable as a law of nature ; nay, it is itself a law of nature, *i.e.* a law of God.<sup>1</sup> The real differences between men are *in the men themselves*, not in their fortunes ; in their several characters, not in their unlike conditions. Their experience of life, and their view of life, does not depend on the accidents of station, or on the events which befall them, but on differences of nature, disposition, aim.

Thus, in the impressive words of the author I have just cited, "justice is done between man and man where justice is sure, and where it is perfect, *in themselves*"; and when we complain that justice is not done here and now, it is because we do not look deep enough, and inward enough, to find it. And so true is this that, as we all feel, the very worst injustice would be done, if the experience of one kind of man were or could be allotted to another ; for what more cruel and intolerable fate could befall a genuinely good and upright man than that he should be condemned to become a rogue however prosperous, or a hypocrite however successful ?

It is true, then, and it is a truth which no one can question, that, in some good measure, every man gets the due reward of his deeds even in the present world, in their different experience of life, in their several capacities of enjoying that which is good in it and acquiring its best wealth.

<sup>1</sup> For some of the thoughts, and even for some of the words in this and the next two paragraphs, I am indebted to a noble discourse on "Gods Many Among Christians," by the Rev. John Service of Inch.

The law which metes out their reward to them, since it works in the very inmost depths of character, is invariable and universal: you can no more gather a good man's experience from a bad man's life than you can gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles. That law has also this marked characteristic of a law of Nature, that, working always and everywhere, it also works with the most delicate precision and truth. "Among the good on the one hand, among the evil on the other, none even of the nicest shades of character are lost in all the seeming confusion of earthly things; but the meek have their experience, and the proud have theirs, and the pure have theirs, and the unforgiving and unkind and ungenerous have theirs. In being what he is, whether good or evil, and irrespective of all that may happen to him here or hereafter—so the eternal Justice has decreed—every man has his reward." There is therefore no need for the alarm felt by some good men, no room for the fear lest justice should fail, even if all stories of God's mercy, or man's reading of them, should be true. Justice can never fail. Even though there were no future "place of torment"; even though there should be, as some contend, doors of escape from it, or bridges over the "great gulf" which divides it from the heavenly shore; yet, since every man carries his own fate in his own character, bears his doom in his very self, no man can possibly escape his doom, no man can possibly separate himself from his fate. There is, and must be, an eternal distinction between the good and the bad. Only as character is changed, purified, sweetened, elevated, can we rise into a happier and fuller experience of the salvation of God.

In large measure, then, the theology—if it ought not rather to be called the morality—of this Psalm is true; it is verified by the fact that even in the present world justice is in large measure done between man and man: in the fact that as a man is, so his experience of life is: in the

fact that, as a man who is insensible to the beauty of nature or art loses much of the charm of life, so a man who is dead to the charms of truth, righteousness, kindness, self sacrifice, loses the true good and wealth of life, even though he be unconscious of the loss. I do not say that this justice is perfect; for perfect justice may demand that all our conditions, outward as well as inward, should be drawn into conformity with our several characters: and this we see not yet. But in the large invariable fact that every man's experience and enjoyment of life, and even his real possession of the world around him,<sup>1</sup> varies as his character varies, we have an infallible proof that even now already Justice is at work upon us; as well as the sure and solemn pledge that hereafter it will do its perfect work upon us, and draw our whole external environment into harmony with our inward character and life.

Meantime, it will be well for us to dwell much and often on the Divine Justice which shapes our experience, and in large measure our very lot, in *this* world. We shall do well to recognize and enforce the fact insisted on in our Psalm, that our true gains and losses, our real happiness and misery, our substantial wealth and penury, depend on what we are in ourselves. We shall do well to teach our children, or our congregations, to hate that which is evil and to follow after that which is good, not only because their choice will determine their future condition, but also because it does and must determine their present state, their use, experience, and enjoyment of life in this world; because the good of being good is in *being* good, and not in outward success or even in freedom from inward remorse; because the evil of being evil is in *being* evil, and not only in the loss or misery it breeds. For if we base our homilies to them and our exhortations on this ground, we are building on a rock from which no storm of change, and no stress of doubt, will ever

<sup>1</sup> See EXPOSITION, *First Series*, vol. iv. pp. 256 *et seq.*

dislodge them ; we are teaching them a truth, a fact, which all their after experience of life can only confirm, and which will grow the more true to them the more they see of men and cities. Science is with us, as well as revelation. Even the most sceptical of men, even those who reject the Gospel story as an incredible or outworn fable, believe as earnestly as we do, that character determines fate ; that what a man is determines, not only what he will be, but what his present experience of life must be ; that to be weak and bad is to be miserable, to lose the true wealth of life, and miss its supreme joy ; while to be good, pure, upright, kind, generous, is to gain that wealth and secure that joy.

In teaching this truth therefore, in insisting—in the spirit, if not in the words, of the Psalmist—on the Divine Justice which regulates our present lives, and makes each man's experience answer to his character, we are teaching a truth which can never be brought into doubt even to those whose minds are all clouded with doubt. Into whatever critical and inauspicious conditions they may shift, into whatever strange and infected latitudes they may sail, here is a fact that can never grow questionable to them ; a truth which they can never let go, or which will never let go of them ; and yet a fact, a truth which, as they study, receive, and act upon it, may yet bring them back to God ; nay, *must* bring them back to God, and ensure his blessing on them in the very proportion in which they recognize it and shape their course by it.

S. Cox.



## *MORALITY AND RELIGION.*

MORALITY is actual conformity to some human standard of goodness; Religion, at least in the Christian meaning of the word, is an unceasing effort after conformity to a divine ideal. If this distinction be borne in mind, it will meet many objections and remove many difficulties, to a few of which I wish briefly to apply it.

The first is one which has frequently proved a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. It is a fact which experience forces upon us, and which it is impossible, were it desirable, to disguise, that many men who profess to be Christians, and of whom there is good reason to believe that they are what they profess to be, are by no means distinguished by a very high degree of moral excellence; while others, who make no such profession, display qualities and perform acts of a far more admirable character. And yet the former, in spite of their manifold defects, are described as being acceptable in the sight of God; while the latter, with all their excellencies, are represented as being rejected by Him. Hence it comes to pass that the Christian doctrine of righteousness has seemed to some unreasonable and unintelligible, teaching the paradox that "goodness is not good except it have added to it some incomprehensible element which does not make those who boast of its possession visibly more noble and heavenly than others."<sup>1</sup>

Paradoxical as it may at first sight seem, it is yet true that, in a most important sense, goodness,—real goodness,—is not good in the Christian meaning of the word, and does not render its possessor acceptable in the sight of God, except it have added to it another element, which to

<sup>1</sup> "F. W. Robertson's *Life and Letters*," vol. i. p. 157.

some may well seem incomprehensible—the element of dissatisfaction—the sense of sin.

The reasonableness of the Christian doctrine of righteousness can perhaps be best illustrated by an example. It is sufficiently established as a matter of scientific fact that moral dispositions and temperaments, no less than mental, tend to descend from parent to offspring. If we take a man born of a long line of virtuous ancestors, we shall probably find him the possessor of a moral constitution of superior quality, exceptionally strong to resist temptation to evil, and predisposed to much that is good. But it is clear that, in so far as this constitution was inherited, it cannot be called “moral” in the sense of implying merit in its possessor; it is a merely natural endowment; a man has no more praise for receiving it at his birth than he would have for being born with a healthy body or a ponderous brain. So again, on the other hand, we may suppose an opposite case—that of a man descended from an inferior moral stock, the son of parents who for generations have been vicious and degraded. Such an one would in all probability inherit a deteriorated, and in this sense a depraved, moral nature, one in which the impulses of sense were disproportionately strong and the spiritual forces weak and undeveloped. Yet, in so far as this nature was inherited, it cannot be called immoral in the sense of implying sin in its possessor; a man could no more be blamed for it than he could be blamed for his diminutive stature or for the colour of his skin.

Let us suppose two men, so differently endowed by nature, passing through life and playing their respective parts on the stage of temporal circumstance. The former displays many admirable qualities, performs many generous and gracious actions, and is necessarily and rightly approved and honoured by all with whom he has to do. But though moral, he is not religious; he remains satisfied with the

goodness which is his by natural gift, and does not aspire after and struggle towards a higher perfection. He does not win his way upward ; but rather, since in such a matter not to strive to rise is to fall, sinks slowly to a lower level, and leaves to his children a smaller portion of moral power than that into the possession of which he himself was born. The latter labours under natural disadvantages which embarrass him at every step ; it costs him much effort to be even a little good ; the flesh wars against the spirit with violent, and incessant, and sometimes overmastering, power. He is emphatically a sinner ; and is necessarily regarded with little admiration, and often justly condemned, by those around him. But he is conscious of and dissatisfied with his sinfulness. He has seen something of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ ; and, in a certain measure, however small, grows into likeness to it. And he leaves to his children a nobler nature than his own, a greater sensibility to spiritual influences, a faculty for more sustained virtuous effort, increased power (if the will be not wanting) to become the sons of God.

Now, according to the Christian doctrine, it is the latter who is justified in the sight of God rather than the other. The latter is a Christian, exceedingly imperfect, but still sincere ; the former is irreligious, unconverted ; highly gifted by the great Master, but not rendering to Him the usury which He requires in return for his gifts. And, so understood, the principle is no paradox ; it is perfectly intelligible and profoundly equitable. It is not the point from which men start, nor the position in which at any particular time they stand, by which they will be judged ; but the point at which they aim and the progress which they have made. It is not the ten talents, or the five, or the two which they received at the beginning which is the measure of their fidelity, but the amount which has been gained by their use. The Judge of all the earth *will* do right ;

He will decide our destiny by no arbitrary and unreasonable rule, but by a rule which will commend itself to every man's conscience: to whom little has been given of him will the less be required; and to whom He has committed much of him He will ask the more. But in all cases He will expect and demand "usury." In this respect He is a "hard" master; and, though He will liberally reward those who have been faithful but in a little, He will cast every unprofitable servant into the outer darkness.

This principle should always be borne in mind when we attempt to appraise the characters of men. We can only judge them by their works; we are bound to judge them by these. But the true moral worth of an agent depends, after all, not upon the utility or any other quality of the act considered in itself, but on the degree of moral effort which its performance involves; and this differs immensely in different individuals, and can at best be but very inadequately estimated by men. "What's done we partly may compute, but know not what's resisted." God only holds the balance in which natural power, and circumstance, and motive, and temptation can be weighed; and He alone can pass a sure judgment.

And the principle applies to the case of Christians as to all others. Their imperfections prove nothing against the divine efficacy of their religion; for they are justified by faith, and not by works—by the inward motive, by the moral effort, and not by the outward act. If indeed religion professed to be, as some seem to suppose, a sort of magical charm acting suddenly and once for all upon those who receive it, raising them sometimes from the depths of degradation and placing them always upon an assured height of excellence, it would be a fair objection to its claims that many who have embraced it, apparently in full sincerity, remain men of very defective virtue, no better—perhaps, when tried by external standards, even worse—than many



of their non-Christian neighbours. The objection would be fair, and it would be fatal. But Christianity makes no such pretensions. The faith which it imparts justifies its possessors, not by raising them to any particular *state* of righteousness, but by placing them upon the true *line* of righteousness, determining their progress along a path which in time, or in eternity, will make all who walk therein perfect. It does, indeed, claim to effect at once a radical change in every one who receives it. But then the change *is* radical, beginning with the root, and only by degrees improving the visible appearance of the foliage and the fruit. It does this also surely, but it does so by the operation of an influence which, like all divine influences, works gradually and for the most part without observation. Sometimes, it is true, the change seems startlingly sudden and complete ; the whole nature of the man appears to be transformed as in a moment ; the work of sanctification seems to be accomplished at once. But these are exceptions, and not the rule ; and, if carefully examined, would probably be often found to be no real exceptions at all.

It must always be remembered that Christianity claims to be a universal religion. As such, it deals directly with men as they are, taking them at their worst and helping them to become better, and not waiting until they have become better without its help. It would consequently be unreasonable to expect that all its subjects, even those who are the most sincere, should have attained at any particular time to any determinate degree of improvement. The process is a gradual one, and the degrees are infinite. The ladder by which men must rise to God, though it reaches to heaven, rests upon the earth ; the first step is so low that the weakest and most degraded can make it if they will ; the last is too lofty for the strongest and most advanced to attempt. But though no particular stage of moral excellence can be fixed as that falling short of which a man cannot be a

Christian, the rule is absolute that the point at which all must aim shall be nothing less than the highest. Whatever the degree of attainment may at any time be, there must always be aspiration and effort upwards. The sense of sin, the consciousness of shortcoming, is a necessary condition to the first step, and to all after progress. If this element be absent, whatever may be our position in the sight of men, we cannot attain to the righteousness which is by faith in Jesus Christ. In his school there is room for all classes, except the self-complacent. An imperfectly good man may be a Christian; all men, and consequently all Christians, are imperfect. A man who is a great sinner may be a Christian, for he may be earnestly contending against sin. But a sinner who is content with his sinfulness can never be a Christian, and as little can a righteous man who is content with his righteousness.

Herein consists the great distinction between Morality and Religion. A true religion must impel all its subjects, however excellent they may be, to follow after something yet beyond them, to press towards the mark of a higher calling than they have yet attained; whereas a man may be moral, in the ordinary meaning of the word, with little effort and without aspiration. He has simply to compare himself with the standard of the age and country in which he lives—to conform to the *mores* of the time; and if, as often happens, his natural constitution and fortunate circumstances enable him easily to endure this test, his work is done and he may rest satisfied. He will be a righteous man, justified by his works in the sight of his fellow-men, and needing no repentance. But his righteousness, though good as far as it goes, will go comparatively but a little way. It will be to a great extent negative rather than positive, consisting rather in abstraction from evil than in energetic pursuit of excellence—the “stupid goodness” which Milton has, rightly enough, not hesitated to ascribe as a temporary

possibility even to the evil one.<sup>1</sup> At the best it will not exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees—sufficient for the practical purposes of earth, but not sufficient to lead men into the kingdom of heaven.

Christianity, as a divine religion, and which as such can be satisfied with nothing less than perfection, necessarily rejects all human standards of morality, not as intrinsically bad, but as infinitely insufficient. It describes the virtues, however excellent in themselves, in which men complacently wrap themselves, as “filthy rags.” It denounces the righteousness which is satisfied with itself, though it may be real righteousness as far as it goes, more vehemently than the worst sin which feels that it is sinful, placing the very publicans and harlots who cry “God be merciful to us!” before the moral Pharisee who thanks God that he is not as they. Better, far better, in its esteem is it that a man should stumble incessantly in the effort to advance than that he should make no progress, however high his position may be, or however apparently secure. To fall is comparatively a small thing, if it be indeed a fall and not a wilful grovelling; but to stand still is full of peril.

A clear apprehension of this distinction will remove all difficulty with respect to the Christian doctrine of imputed righteousness. As sometimes stated it is a very strange, when rightly regarded it is a very simple, matter. A man who is a true disciple of Christ, and who is faithfully following Him, is accounted as being like Him already; for he is so in purpose and moral aim, and must be so in very deed in due time. In the eyes of Him who seeth the end from the beginning, and will surely bring to pass that which He hath purposed, those who have attained to faith have attained to the end of faith, the perfection of the moral character, the

<sup>1</sup> “That space the evil one abstracted stood  
From his own evil, and for the time remained  
*Stupidly good.*”

*Paradise Lost*, ix. 463.

salvation of the soul. They are not judged by Him as they must be by their fellows, by the place in which at any particular time they stand; but by the height at which they aim, to which they constantly tend, and to which He is pledged to bring them in the end.

It will explain also the profound sense of sin which all Christians feel in a greater or less degree, and which, strangely enough as it might at first sight seem, becomes not less but more intense in proportion to their advance in holiness. There is nothing strange in it when rightly considered. The more closely any man approaches to an ideal which deserves to be called divine, the more clearly must he perceive how high it towers above him, and the lower in his own esteem will he consequently be. There is nothing unnatural in this. It is but a form of that deep dissatisfaction, that "divine despair," which all true artists feel when they compare the fairest image which their hands have wrought with the unseen beauty which can never be expressed. And every man who would be religious, and not moral merely, is an artist; the only difference being that the material on which he labours, and which he strives to fashion into a perfect form, is not brass or marble, but his own character. A hard task indeed! Those who have laboured at it most faithfully best know how intractable the material with which they have to deal; those who have laboured most successfully feel most profoundly how imperfect the attainment, how infinite the shortcoming. The task is hard, and it would be hopeless if the effort ended with the life that now is, and were sustained by no influences other than those of earth. But it was to make it possible that Christ came with the revelation of immortality and the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Christian religion, with its Divine aids, its supernatural sanctions, its command of the powers of the world to come, was not meant for the production of men of merely moderate goodness. Its heaven of



endless life and infinite progress was ordained for those only who move "along the line of limitless desires," and tend towards a mark too lofty to be reached in time. Like Thorwaldsen, dejected and distressed because he felt satisfied with his statue of Christ, and saw in that satisfaction a sign that his genius was decaying,<sup>1</sup> the man who should feel satisfied with the image of Christ in his own character might well be dismayed, might well fear that his spiritual insight was failing, and that he was in danger of losing the "great idea" which alone could lead him on to perfection. If he could not rid himself of his self-complacency at the advance he had made by the contemplation of the immeasurable heights above him; if he could not attain to that inestimable spiritual possession, a sense of sin, which is but another name for aspiration after infinite excellence, it would be an evident sign that he had been wrong from the beginning; that he was one of the righteous men who "need no repentance," and have consequently no call to enter into the school of Christ.

T. M. HOME.

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<sup>1</sup> "I have heard of a remarkable speech of his made to a friend who found him one day in low spirits. Being asked whether anything distressed him, he answered, 'My genius is decaying.' 'What do you mean?' said the visitor. 'Why, here is my statue of Christ; it is the first of my works I have felt satisfied with. Till now my idea has always been far beyond what I could execute. But it is no longer so. I shall never have a great idea again.'"—*Guesses at Truth*, 1st series, p. 83.

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ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN INSCRIPTIONS IN  
THEIR BEARING ON THE OLD TESTAMENT  
SCRIPTURES.

I.

I HAVE thought it might be useful to many readers of Scripture to bring before them the results of the investigations that have been carried on during the last twenty or thirty years, into the inscriptions which have been brought to light by the researches of Sir Austen Layard, Sir Henry Rawlinson, Mr. George Smith of the British Museum, and other explorers, and which have been interpreted by the Rev. A. H. Sayce, Mr. Fox Talbot, M. Oppert, M. Lenormant, Mr. S. Birch, and other scholars. For the most part their interpretations lie in volumes of *Transactions* not easily accessible to the general reader; and where, as in the "Records of the Past," published by Bagster and Sons, under the sanction of the *Society of Biblical Archaeology*, they are in a form more easily consulted, they are presented without any chronological order, and without any systematic attempt to indicate in what way they connect themselves with the Biblical narratives or what light they throw upon them. Such an attempt I have now taken in hand. It is right to state that in doing so I do not lay claim to the character of an Assyriologist. I am not an expert in these matters and cannot read a single cuneiform character. As regards the translations of the inscriptions, I rely therefore entirely on the authority of those who are experts, accepting them as authoritative where I find an adequate *consensus*, indicating differences where the experts are not agreed, endeavouring, according to my power, to trace their connexion with the histories or prophetic utterances of the Old Testament. Books like Mr. George Smith's "Chaldæan History of Genesis," Sir Edward Strachey's "Hebrew Politics in the Times of Sargon and

Sennacherib," and the Rev. T. K. Cheyne's "Commentary on Isaiah," shew what a full harvest awaits a careful and conscientious study of these materials. My own part, indeed, in following in their footsteps is hardly more than that of a "gleaner of the grapes when the vintage is done." All that I venture to hope is that in this case it may be true, in the old biblical phraseology, that the "gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim may be better than the vintage of Abiezer" (Judges viii. 2), that labour bestowed upon the facts which have been brought to light from the long buried past may be more fruitful than the vague speculative conjectures of earlier commentators who had no such facts to build upon, and whose horizon was bounded by the second-hand reports of later Chaldæan historians like Berosus and Sanchoniathon, or the third-hand traditions of compilers and epitomists like Herodotus and Justin.

As a matter of convenience for the reader, I purpose referring chiefly to the "Records of the Past" already mentioned, under the initials *R. P.*, and Lenormant's "Manual of the Ancient History of the East," under the form *Len.* Other references, as occasion may require, will be given more fully.

## I. THE HISTORY OF THE CREATION AND THE FALL.

### *Genesis i.-iii.*

The writings of the Chaldæan scribe Berosus had long ago led scholars like Grotius to the conclusion that a tradition of the Creation and the Flood, more or less parallel to that of Genesis, had been handed down from a distant age, in the plains of the Euphrates. He describes a mythical hero-monster, half-fish and half-man, named Oannes, who, coming from the Erythræan sea, played the part of a Prometheus, instructing men in language and the arts. From him had come a narrative of the creation of the world.

“There was a time in which there existed nothing but darkness and an abyss of waters.” The waters were peopled with monstrous forms, half-human and half-bestial, or strange combinations, such as are seen in Babylonian seals and cylinders as well as in their larger sculptures, of the body of one animal, with the head or tail of another. They were governed by a female deity, named Omoroca, which was the Chaldæan for the Greek Thalatta or Sea, but might also mean the Moon. Things being so, Bel, or Belus, came, and cut the woman in twain, and of one half formed the earth, and of the other the heavens. “This,” Berosus goes on to say, “was an allegory.” His explanation of it is itself hardly less allegorical. The whole universe consisted of moisture, and as living creatures were produced by it, Belus cut off his own head, and from the earth, with which the blood mingled, man was formed, and so had the gift of reason, and Belus, whom Berosus identified with Zeus, “divided the darkness and separated the earth from the heavens and reduced the universe to order. The living creatures could not bear the new light that thus streamed in upon them, and died, and he created others such as we now see. He made also the stars, the sun, the moon, and the five planets.”

It is obvious that this reads like a distorted and grotesque counterpart of the narrative of Genesis i. Berosus professes to base it upon ancient Chaldæan records, but, as he was a contemporary of Alexander the Great (*circ.* B.C. 330–260), it is, of course, impossible to say how far his narrative might have been based upon the sacred history itself, which, through the Babylonian exile and the continued residence of the Jews on the shores of the Euphrates, must have become more or less known to the Chaldæan men of letters. A comparison with the *Theogonia* of Hesiod, with its Chaos, Gaia (=Earth), Ouranos and the like, or with the history of creation in the religious poems of India, might, on the other hand, suggest that it was a case of parallelism



without derivation, and that these were the natural lines of thought in which the minds of men ran when they attempted to construct a cosmogony and to solve the problem of the *Origines* of the Universe.

Another Chaldæan account has been preserved by a Greek writer Damascius,<sup>1</sup> who lived *circ.* A.D. 550, and this has, it will be seen, the interest of presenting a closer agreement with the actual Chaldæan records that have been recently discovered.

"The Babylonians speak not of *one* origin of all things, for they make two original beings, Tauthe and Apason, making Apason the husband of Tauthe, whom they call the mother of the gods. Their only son was Moymis. And another race proceeded from them, namely Dakhe and Dakhos. And again a third race proceeded from the same, namely Kissare and Assoros. These had three children, Anos, Illinos, and Aos. And the son of Aos and Daukè was called Belos, who they say was the Demiurgus or fabricator of the world."<sup>2</sup>

The Chaldæan tablets, in which the following account of the creation was given, were first discovered and published by Mr. George Smith, in the *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, iv. 363, and again in his "Chaldæan History of Genesis" (p. 62.) The version that follows is by Mr. H. Fox Talbot (*R. P.*, ix. 117). The date of the tablets is approximately fixed by inscriptions on the back which record the fact that the history of the creation had been copied by Assurbanipal (King of Assyria, B.C. 667-647), and placed in his palace for the instruction of his people. The first tablet itself runs thus:—

## I.

"When the upper region was not yet called heaven,  
And the lower region was not yet called earth,

<sup>1</sup> Cory's "Ancient Fragments," p. 318.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

And the Abyss of Hades had not yet opened its arms,  
 Then the chaos of waters gave birth to all of them,  
 And the waters were gathered to one place (Gen. i. 1-6).  
 No men yet dwelt together: no animal yet wandered about;  
 None of the gods had yet been born,  
 Their names were not spoken; their attributes were not known.  
 Then the eldest of the gods,  
 Lakhmu and Lakhamu, were born,  
 And grew up . . . .  
 Assur and Kissur were born next,  
 And lived through long periods.  
 And . . . . ."

Here the fragment is broken and the inscription stops. The next three tablets are too mutilated for continuous translation, but appear to have described the stages of creative work. Words like "earth," "heaven," "firmament," "sea," "the gods," "the dwelling of man," have been sufficiently identified.<sup>1</sup>

## II.

The fifth tablet is at once more complete and more important.

"He constructed dwellings for the great Gods,<sup>2</sup>  
 He fixed up constellations, whose figures were like animals.  
 He made the year. Into four quarters he divided it.  
 Twelve months he established, with their constellations, three by three,  
 And for the days of the year he appointed festivals.  
 He made dwellings for the planets, for their rising and setting.  
 (Gen. i. 14)  
 And that nothing should go amiss, and that the course of none  
 should be retarded,  
 He placed with them the dwellings of Bel and Hea.

<sup>1</sup> Smith's "Chaldæan History of Genesis," p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Smith translates, "It was delightful, all that was fixed by the great Gods," and compares it with "God saw that it was good," of Gen. i.

He opened great gates on every side :  
 He made strong the portals, on the left hand and on the right.  
 In the centre he placed luminaries.  
 The moon he appointed to rule the night (Gen. i. 14),  
 And to wander through the night, until the dawn of day.  
 Every month without fail he made holy assembly-days.  
 In the beginning of the month, at the rising of the night,  
 It shot forth its horns to illuminate the heavens.  
 On the seventh day he appointed a holy day  
 And to cease from all business he commanded. (Gen. ii. 1-3.)  
 Then arose the sun in the horizon of heaven . . . ."  
 [Here the fragment becomes too mutilated for translation.]

Comparing this with the narrative of Damascius we have to note, (1) that his Tauthe answers to the *Tamti* (=“ sea,” or “ waters ”) of the inscription ; (2) his Apason, to Abzes (=abyss) of i. 3 ; (3) his Moymis to Mummu (=chaos) of i. 5 ; (4) his Dakhe and Dakhos, to Lakhmu and Lakhamu of i. 10. In the last instance the philologist will recognise a phonetic change common enough in all languages, such as transforms the same root into the Greek *δάκρυον* and the Latin *lacryma*, Odysseus into Ulysses, Polydeukes into Pollux, Ægidius into Giles, and the like.<sup>1</sup> The two last names are said to represent the male and female principles of motion and reproduction. The identity of Assoros and Kissare, of Anos and Aos, and Belos with the Assur, Kissur, Anu, Hea, and Bel of the tablet is sufficiently obvious. The student cannot fail to be struck with the coincidence which this inscription presents to the Genesis narrative as indicated by the references given above. The connexion of the sun and moon with “ signs and seasons and days and years,” and the observance alike of the new-moon festival and of the Sabbath, point with hardly a shadow of uncertainty to the conclusion that both, prominent as they were in the religion of Israel (Num. x. 10, xxviii. 11 ; 1 Sam. xx. 5 ;

<sup>1</sup> Key's “ Alphabet,” Letters D and L, pp. 55, 73.

2 Kings iv. 23), did not originate there, but in the land from which Abraham, as the father of the faithful, had started on his wanderings. The relation of the two narratives to each other presents a somewhat more difficult problem. Is the Genesis record based upon that of the Chaldæan, purified by the wisdom of a higher monotheistic faith, with the names of the genealogy of gods struck out? Is the Chaldean narrative a later form of the Hebrew, blended with the polytheism into which the Assyrians and Chaldæans fell when they had lost the primitive tradition of a purer faith? Either theory is tenable enough, and compatible with the recognition that in the Genesis history we have the teaching of an inspired wisdom, by which the writer was guided to record what he found in the materials before him, without the intermixture of baser and incongruous elements. If we assume, as seems probable, without entering into vexed questions as to the actual authorship of Moses, that the book had an Egyptian origin, it seems to shew that the writer, though "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts vii. 22) was learned also in that of the Chaldæans. With that wisdom he may have become acquainted either through a tradition handed down from Abraham, or by direct communication with Assyria. If, with most recent Egyptologists, we identify the Pharaoh of the Exodus history with a king of the Eighteenth or Nineteenth dynasty,<sup>1</sup> there had been ample openings for such communication, in the conquests of Thothmes I. and III., which reduced the kings of Nineveh and Asshur or Ellasar to the rank of tributary princes (*Len.* i. 233).

It is obvious that the first chapter of Genesis stands, with this light thrown upon it, in a clearer relation to the religious history of mankind than it did before. There are

<sup>1</sup> *Adhuc sub judice lis est.* M. Lenormant (i. 95, 243) fixes on Seti I. (= Menephthah) of the Nineteenth; Canon Cook (*Excursus* in "Speaker's Commentary," i. 458) on Thothmes III. of the Eighteenth dynasty.



no adequate grounds, except those of an arbitrary *à priori* theory, for regarding it as having the character of a full-orbed revelation, which had had no previous foreshadowings, and was to be, for all time, the limit beyond which science was not to pass, and the outward form of which it might not dare to modify. That outward form was conditioned, it is obvious, by the pre-existing beliefs. The writer used a symbolic language such as his readers could understand. The distinguishing excellence of his narrative is, that he had the wisdom given him from above, which taught him to preserve that which represented a divine and eternal truth, from the baser admixture of human imaginations. The Sabbaths and the New Moons which the law of Moses enjoined were not then heard of for the first time, but were surviving memorials of that earlier faith and worship which Abraham had known before he began his wanderings from Ur of the Chaldees, and which continued to be observed there for centuries before the Fourth Commandment was proclaimed on Sinai.

## II. THE FALL OF THE ANGELS.

Both Jewish and Christian traditions have, it is well known, interpolated into the history of the creation that which is not in the record. They have invented a narrative, more or less legendary in character, of the creation and fall of the angels, or messengers, of God. In the period in which the teachers of theology did not shrink from any imaginable problem, intruding into things which they had not seen, it was debated whether angels were created before the seven days' work began, or on one of the seven, and if so, on which; whether they were created in the empyrean heaven or in the visible firmament; whether the sin of the Devil was that he desired to be like God; whether he fell in the first moment of his existence or after an interval of greater or less

duration, and so on almost *ad infinitum*.<sup>1</sup> The silence of the primeval record in these matters is itself sufficiently significant. The pride of Lucifer, son of the morning, the war in heaven, the expulsion of the rebels,—these, which mediæval tradition, popularized by Cædmon and Dante and Milton, has made almost or altogether part of the creed of Christendom, are there passed over without a word. Whatever explanation, symbolical or otherwise, was to be given of the mystery of evil, this was not to form part of it.

The reticence, remarkable in itself, becomes all the more so when we learn that the legend existed, almost in its full-blown form, in those Chaldæan records which embodied the history of the creation in a shape presenting so many striking parallelisms to the narrative of Genesis. What follows, from a fragment which has been translated by Mr. Fox Talbot, in *R. P.* vii. 127, reads almost like an extract from the earliest of the poets named above.

#### THE REVOLT OF HEAVEN.

(The first four lines are broken.)

“The Divine Being spake three times, the commencement of a Psalm.

The God of holy songs, Lord of religion and worship,  
Sealed a thousand singers and musicians; and established a  
choral band

Who to his hymn were to respond in multitudes . . .

With a loud cry of contempt they broke up his holy song,  
Spoiling, confusing, confounding his hymn of praise.

The God of the bright crown, with a wish to summon his adherents

Sounded a trumpet-blast which would wake the dead,

Which to those rebel angels prohibited return.

He stopped their service, and sent them to the gods who were his enemies.

<sup>1</sup> The student who does not shrink from the unprofitable task may consult Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. Theol.*, I. Qu. I.-lxiv. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, xi. xii. Peter Lomb. *Sentt.*, ii. Dist. 1-10.

In their room he created mankind.

The first who received life, dwelt along with him.

May he give them strength never to neglect his word,

Following the serpent's voice whom his hands had made!

And may the God of divine speech expel from his five thousand  
that wicked thousand,

Who in the midst of his heavenly song had shouted evil blas-  
phemies!

The god Ashur, who had seen the malice of those gods who  
deserted their allegiance

To raise a rebellion, refused to go forth with them."

[Nine or ten lines follow which are too broken for translation.]

It will be noticed that the one point which the narrative has in common with the Genesis record is, that the serpent appears as the symbol of evil, tempting and seeking to destroy mankind. The gradual infiltration of the Chaldæan legend into the creed of Israel remains, however, to be briefly traced. Partial parallels, the gathering of angels round the throne of God, are found, as Mr. Talbot has pointed out, in the poetry of Job, where the "sons of God" are represented as "shouting for joy" when "the foundations of the earth were laid" (Job xxxviii. 7), perhaps also in the imagery which paints those sons of God as presenting themselves before Jehovah, and Satan among them as the mocking and malignant accuser of the righteous sufferer (Job i. 6-10; ii. 1-6). So far as this is so, we have to remember that the land of Uz was not far removed from the attacks, and therefore the influence, of the Chaldæans (Job i. 17), and that the writer of the great poem may have adapted the current belief to his own higher purpose. It is possible that the language of Isaiah xiv. 12-14, in its bold dramatic presentation of the daring God-defying ambition of the king of Babylon,—language in which both Jewish and Christian interpreters have seen a direct reference to the fall of the angels, and which, through the Vulgate and the Authorized Version, has stamped on the name of "Lucifer,"

(the light-bearer, the star of the morning), its modern connotation,—may have had its starting-point in a knowledge of the Chaldean tradition. The king of Babylon, the prophet may be understood to say, was reproducing, in his plans for a world-embracing all-subduing empire, the rebellious self-asserting spirit of the leader of the rebels among those earlier “sons of the morning,” and like them was destined to fall from the heaven of prosperity and power to the Sheol, the Hades, of the “sides of the pit.”

It was natural that the long sojourn of the Jews in Babylon, and their subsequent intercourse with it, should make the Chaldean tradition more familiar to them, and in the first century of the Christian æra, it appears in something like complete proportions. So St. Peter, in the second Epistle commonly ascribed to him, speaks of God as “having cast the angels that sinned into Tartarus and delivered them to chains of darkness” (2 Pet. ii. 3, 4). So, in an Epistle obviously drawn from the same source, St. Jude, though here the reference seems to be to a sin of sensual lust like that of Genesis vi., rather than to one of rebellious pride, speaks of the “angels who kept not their first estate” and “were reserved in everlasting chains under darkness” (Jude, Verse 6); and the Apocryphal Book of Enoch (Chaps. vii. and viii.) narrates that fall with fuller and more legendary details. In the two latter cases, however, as in the Jewish legend that appears in the Talmud (*Nischmath Chaim*, quoted in Nork’s “*Rabbinische Quellen und Parallelen*,” p. 363), the fall of the angels appears as *subsequent* to the creation of man, and the rebellion of Satan and his hosts has by the consensus of Jewish and Christian belief been placed at a date *prior* to that creation, and so reproduces the more primitive tradition of the Assyrian tablet. It is, perhaps, not altogether without significance that the Epistle in which St. Peter mentions the fall of the angels in words which at least admit of its being referred to the sin of



rebellion and not of lust, was probably written, like his first Epistle, from Babylon (1 Pet. v. 13), where the old tradition may have survived among the Jews who dwelt there.

We note, lastly, that the Assyrian tablet so recently brought to light, appears to record (l. 15) the belief which, flowing through various channels, Jewish and Christian, became almost the received dogma of the mediæval schoolmen, that the Divine purpose in the creation of man was to fill up the gap that was left by the angels that fell. The belief was current in the time of Augustine, who names it in his "Enchiridion" (c. 29). Peter Lombard ("Liber Sentt." ii. 9), referring to Augustine (*ut supra*), speaks of it as held by some, but prefers, as more orthodox, the view that the number of the saved would be equal to that of the angels who remained faithful. In the dogmatic spirit which first starts and then answers all imaginable questions, it was assumed that the fixed and predestinated number of the saved among mankind would be identical with that of the rebellious, or else with that of the faithful and steadfast, angels. A survival of this belief may perhaps be traced in the prayer of the Burial Service of the Church of England, that God would be pleased "shortly to accomplish the number of his elect," and so to bring about more speedily the great far-off event of the final judgment, which was assumed to be waiting for the attainment of that number as the goal of all the earthly past, and the starting-point of the glorious eternity.

It will be admitted, I think, that there is something suggestive in the fact that the popular belief in the history of the revolted angels, which has almost become part of the creed of Christendom, but which the writers of the Old Testament passed over with so significant a reticence, is found to run up to the distant period indicated by the Chaldæan tablets which were reproduced by Assurbanipal. To discuss the relation of the two, as the result of derivation, or as an example of unconscious parallelism, lies, as before,

outside the range of my present enquiry. That enquiry, as far as this subject is concerned, will best end by recalling the fact that the Chaldaean legend is not without parallels in the cosmogony and mythology of other nations, and presents many striking resemblances to the revolt of Ahriman and his angels against Ormuzd, which formed part of the Zoroastrian faith, and the revolt of the Titans against Zeus as related by Hesiod (*Theogon.* 729). The Mahometan account of the rebellion of Eblis<sup>1</sup> as given in the Koran (*Sur.* xxxviii.), representing, as that book does, the confluence of decayed faiths, may have flowed from the traditions either of a corrupt Judaism or a corrupt Christianity.

E. H. PLUMPTRE.

## THE HISTORICAL CHRIST OF ST. PAUL.

### I. THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS (*Continued.*)

ROMANS iii. 25 has a theological significance with which we have here no concern; it constitutes one of the Scriptural proofs of what is called the doctrine of Atonement. The doctrine of Atonement, as is well known, is differently interpreted by different schools; and we have here nothing to do with any of them: we are in search of simple matters of fact. We are trying to discover what was the historical belief of the primitive Church regarding the person of the Christian Founder; and we ignore all questions and statements which do not bear upon this subject. It frequently

<sup>1</sup> The Koran legend, following one of the Rabbinic traditions, gives an account of the fall of Eblis which differs, on the one hand, from the popular mediæval theory, and on the other, from the story of the loves of the Angels as related in the Book of Enoch. Allah created man, and bade the angels do homage to him. All did so but Eblis, who was puffed up with pride, and deemed himself, made out of fire, nobler than man who was made of clay. And so he was banished from heaven, and allowed to roam on earth, seducing all but the true servants of God.

happens, however, that a passage which is mainly designed to teach theology implies a historical belief which it does not express; and in such cases it becomes our duty to extract the historical element from its theological environment. The passage before us is a very striking instance of this. In so far as it is theological, it may be liable to different interpretations; but, on any interpretation which may be given, it assumes a certain historical belief regarding the person of Jesus, a belief which can admit of only one interpretation, and whose significance must be appreciated by all schools.

St. Paul here declares that the Founder of Christianity was set forth as the propitiation for the sins of humanity. The full force of the expression is, "set forth *publicly*." It indicates that the thing was not done in a corner, that it was a matter of historical notoriety. It is not, however, to the fact, nor yet to the publicity of the fact, of Christ's crucifixion, that our attention is here invited. There is, indeed, nothing yet said as to the mode of Christ's death; the phrase "propitiation in his blood" simply implies that it was violent. The point of the passage which invites our attention is the word "propitiation." We do not inquire into its theological meaning in general, or its meaning here in particular; we look rather at the association than at the import of the word. Whatever theological meaning may or may not be attached to it in the Verse before us, it is clearly intended to suggest the idea of sinlessness. It implies the offering up of something for the sins of the people. It was essential in the Jewish worship that the offerings for sin should themselves be unblemished. It is true the Jewish worship only succeeded in reaching to a *physical* unblemishedness; but it was just for this reason that it could not purify in things pertaining to the conscience; the offering of a physical purity could only make the worshipper physically pure, or, in other words, exempt from

legal penalty. It was on this account that the Jewish sacrifices had to be repeated year by year; they were not really propitiations for sin, but only for certain sins, or overt acts of evil. But Paul here declares that the death of the Christian Founder was a propitiation in the absolute sense; a propitiation which took place at a definite historical period of the past, and which had no need to be repeated. The inference is inevitable; he must have held the person of the Founder to have been absolutely sinless. The historical association of the passage is its powerful suggestion of the impression which Christ's moral character must have made upon his contemporaries.

Now it is here incumbent on us to ask whether such an impression could have been created on the principle of the mythical theory; in other words, by clothing with apparent reality a poetic imagination of the mind. That question implies another—whether the mind of St. Paul was likely by nature to have entertained such a poetic imagination. We know that the Apostle had in him the elements of two civilizations, a Judaic and a Gentile culture; if the poetic imagination of a historically sinless being had arisen within him, it must have been generated by one or other of these. Can it be referred to either of them? Let us see. Was it likely to arise from Judaism? Is it not manifest that in the Jewish soil such a plant could never have grown? The notion of a historically sinless being<sup>1</sup> was directly contrary to the Judaic spirit; it ran in the face of the national religion. The Jew had an altogether appalling sense of the horror of sin. The leading principle of his creed was the fact that the world was under law, which was itself a proof that the world was under sin. There was none righteous, no not one; all the imaginations of man's heart were only evil continually. Who could abide in God's

<sup>1</sup> The prophetic conception of a sinless Servant of God predicts an *interrupted* order of history. See Section on 1 Cor. xi. 23.



tabernacle? who could stand on his holy hill? In his sight there was no man living that could be justified. The ideal of the Jewish mind was that of a man walking humbly with his God, conscious that he was unable to direct himself and looking ever to the commands of the Lawgiver. Such a religion could have afforded no scope to the imagination for the conception of a sinless Christ, and would have been adverse to it wheresoever it had been conceived. It would have regarded as impiety any attempt to propagate the belief that a son of Adam could rise into the position of a sinless superiority to law; it would have stigmatized as sacrilege any effort to convince the world that a human soul could ever come to act without reference to the outward commandment. If Paul derived any mythical leaning towards the belief in a sinless Christ, that leaning was certainly not derived from the portion of his life which fell under the dominion of Judaic culture; it must have come from another source.

We have seen that there was another possible source; St. Paul had in him the element of the Gentile as well as of the Jew; and we know that ultimately the Gentile element prevailed in his heart over that of the Jew. Could he, then, have received, from this source, the poetic conception of a sinless being, which the vividness of his fancy made real. There was nothing, indeed, in the Gentile religious tendency which would have made it impiety in Paul to have formed such an idea; the Gentile religious tendency was the opposite extreme from the Jewish. Yet, in this opposite extreme, the Gentile interposed to the natural conception of a sinless Christ an even greater barrier than the Jew. He would not have deemed it impiety to believe in the possibility of a sinless man. But why? Because he attached no importance to sinlessness at all. He would have deemed it great impiety to have doubted the physical strength of the immortals; physical strength was the ideal of his aspir-

ation: but he did not himself hesitate to attribute to the immortals the most ignoble vices. He had no horror of sin as a moral principle. If St. Paul had possessed nothing but a Gentile consciousness, and had he designed to create a Christ out of his own imagination, the Christ his imagination would have produced would have been not only different from, but the very converse of, the one he has depicted. He would have been a man whose life revealed the force of the Divine, not by his power of self-surrender, but by his power of self-aggrandisement; not by pouring out his own blood, but by shedding the blood of his enemies. The fact that the Gentile Apostle has allowed his thoughts to centre on the conception of an ideal whose prominent characteristic is its sinlessness is alone a proof that there must have been something in the historical atmosphere that surrounded him which rendered it necessary for him to transcend his spontaneous imaginings. He has presented to the world a Christ who is not the natural outgrowth either of the past history of Judaism or of the past history of heathendom; the legitimate conclusion seems to be that he has derived the conception from some apparently exceptional elements in the life of his own time.

In *Romans* iv. 25 St. Paul puts together as equally historical the fact of Christ's death and the fact of his resurrection: "Who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification." The juxtaposition of these facts in the same historical connection is worthy of attention if only because the New Testament sometimes employs both the word "death" and the word "resurrection" in a spiritual, and therefore in an unhistorical, sense. When Paul elsewhere says that the bad heart is dead in trespasses and sin, and that the good heart is dead and hid with Christ, he is using the word "death" unhistorically; when the fourth Gospel says that the hour has already come when they that

are in the grave shall hear the Divine Voice and live, it is speaking of resurrection unhistorically. In the passage before us the ideas of death and resurrection must be interpreted in a common spirit; we cannot make the one historical and the other metaphorical. The deliverance for our offences of which St. Paul speaks is beyond all question a physical or bodily death; and, to preserve the congruity of thought, it is necessary to hold that the raising for our justification is in his mind a physical or bodily resurrection. It is also worth observing that, in the mind of Paul, the death and resurrection of the Christian Founder are not only historical facts, but historical facts that have become common-places. Our reason for this statement is that Paul tries to build a theory upon them. No man begins to build theories, or arguments, upon any fact which is not, to his mind, an absolute certainty. The earliest histories are simply chronicles; it is only when the chronicles have become matters of public notoriety that men begin to theorize on the laws which have produced, and on the effects which have followed, the incidents they record. Paul says that the Founder was delivered for our offences; in other words, he affirms that his death was an expiation for the sins of men; and he declares that his resurrection was intended to shew that his expiation had been accepted: "Was raised again for our justification." With these theological statements we have here no concern. The important point is that they *are* theological statements. When a writer comes to build theories upon certain historical incidents, it proves that in the mind of that writer the incidents are beyond all doubt historical; that the facts have passed beyond the region of discussion; and that the only question remaining is: To what conclusion do they point? The theological doctrines which St. Paul is here promulgating are in themselves mysterious enough; and nothing could justify the Apostle's promulgation of them, if, in his mind, there were the

slightest doubt of the facts on which he professes to base them. These facts are Christ's death and resurrection. If to the readers of St. Paul the belief that the Founder of Christianity had died and risen again were anything less than a commonplace of Christian faith, it would have been folly on the part of the Apostle to have grounded upon these facts a doctrine infinitely more mysterious, because infinitely more removed from the possibility of historical verification. The incidental manner in which he introduces these facts, taken in connection with the mysterious theological structure he is prepared to build on them, constitutes a standing proof not only that he himself had accepted them as commonplaces, but that he knew he was speaking to a community who would receive them in the same spirit.

In *Romans* v. 6 we have a repetition of the main point contained in the previous passage, but with an important addition. In the passage last considered we find Paul averring that the Founder of Christianity was delivered up to death as an expiation for the sins of the world; in the Verse before us he adds the historical statement that in this sacrificial act the Founder of Christianity was not a passive victim but an active agent: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." The Christ is here represented not so much as a being who is offered up sacrificially as a being who offers *Himself* up sacrificially. For the first time in the document we are considering, we have the suggestion of a voluntary element in the sacrifice of the Christian Founder; and therefore, for the first time, we have a glimpse into the human heart of that Founder. We have seen Him hitherto in his regal aspect, as the son of David; or in his divine aspect, as the Son of God; or in his official aspect, as the Sacrifice for human sin: we are here called to contemplate Him in the essential aspect of a Son of Man, whose sympathies are



stirred by the perception of human weakness, and whose energies are awakened by the determinate resolve to save. Whatever of a theological character may lie in the words before us, there is at the root of them a historical conviction. They express the Apostle's assurance that the historical life of Him whom he called the Son of God was a life animated and inspired by a purpose—the purpose of death; that the sacrifice to which He was subjected was not in the view of the Founder the martyrdom of a victim, but the voluntary self-surrender of a soul to its legitimate mission; and that the legitimate mission of that soul was recognized by itself to be the accomplishment, by its own sacrifice, of the salvation of mankind.

Now when we turn to the actual portraiture which our recognized Gospels present of the Founder of Christianity, we are struck by a view of the subject which is not only similar, but precisely identical; we do not mention this with the design to establish a harmony; but, as will be seen, for a very different purpose. There can be no question at all that the uniform representation of our recognized Christ is that of a being whose life is animated by the mission of death. Never for a moment do the Gospels even hint at the suggestion that the sacrifice of the Son of Man was an accident. The shadow of the Cross is never absent from Him; He is ever running forward to meet it. He has a baptism to be baptized with, and He is straitened until its accomplishment. Even his moment of transfiguration-glory cannot shut out the vision of the decease to be accomplished at Jerusalem. The sword that is to pierce the heart of the Virgin glitters even in the cradle of the child Jesus. All this is patent on the surface of the narrative, and is not denied by negative critics; what they say is that the Gospels have tried to make Christ's death voluntary in order to make the best of unheroic circumstances. They allege that in the fourth and

latest Gospel, where the idea of Christ's divine personality attains its full development, the voluntary nature of his sufferings is most uncompromisingly asserted; demonstrating the fact that the reaction from the Jewish repugnance to death towards the glorification of death gains ground as Judaism recedes in the distance. It is undeniable, indeed, that in the Gospel of John the fact of Christ's voluntary suffering is expressed in the broadest terms. He lays down his life for the sheep; no man taketh his life from Him; He has power to lay it down, and He has power to take it again. The world can only be fed by eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man; his body is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. Such, again and again reiterated in various forms and metaphors, is the utterance of the Christ in the fourth Gospel; and it certainly marks a sharp contrast to the Judaic repugnance to death. Is, then, the full development of this picture merely the mythical result of the fact that Judaism had passed away, that the armies of Titus had destroyed its walls, that the power of Paganism had superseded its temple and its worship? The answer to that question depends on another. The negative critics have assigned to our Gospels a very late origin, so late as to afford room for a mythical development. The question is, Can we find this thought of our Gospels in any document which is undoubtedly early? If we can, we shall not be able to refer the thought to the fading of Judaism from the memories of men.

Now here is a document which effectually and decidedly answers that question. In a manuscript indubitably belonging to the Apostolic age, written while Jerusalem was standing and while her worship was intact, and betraying in every page the influence of the first Christian atmosphere, we find a view of Christ's work and mission which in every respect conforms to that of the most advanced of our

historical narratives. It is here declared, not merely that his death was sacrificial, but that it was a voluntary sacrifice ; that it was as much a personal and active work of the Master as any incident of his ministry ; and that it was prompted by the motive of pity for the wickedness and the helplessness of mankind. All this is clearly suggested and implied in the words : "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." The force of the preposition "for" is here equivalent to "for the benefit of" ; it frequently means "instead of ;" and, when used in this latter sense, it points to the belief in a vicarious sacrifice ; but, in the passage before us, it is employed to denote a work done with the motive of bringing advantage to another. Paul on this occasion has unmistakably in his view the idea that the Founder of Christianity was driven on to the hour of death by the strength of his own love, was impelled to suffer by the force of his own sympathy with the moral need and moral weakness which He beheld in the souls of his brethren. He advances this conception of the Master, not as a new thing, but as a fact that was well known. The Vatican MS. gives a reading which virtually amounts to this. It is a mere truism to say that Christ died for the ungodly ; the word we translate "yet" is here rendered "at least," that is, "even at the lowest computation." We cannot press this reading of the Vatican MS. as it is unsupported by other authorities ; but we can arrive at the same conclusion even from our Authorized Version. The point in the passage before us which chiefly reveals the fact that Paul held himself to be expressing a Christian truism, is not the translation of any single word, but the general impression produced by the indefinite reference to the benefit of Christ's death. It is not a natural assertion to say that the death of a holy being has brought advantage to an unholy world ; from the human side it is the reverse of natural : and, if stated for

the first time, it would demand explanation. It receives here no explanation; the statement is made in the most general terms, as if the mere fact of its being stated would suffice to recall to the mind its individual details. The conclusion is obvious and irresistible. St. Paul was not imagining a historical fact; he was appealing to something which by the Christian community was universally believed to be historical. He was speaking in general terms, simply because he was speaking of matters well known, whose truth would at once be endorsed by the consciousness of his hearers. His statement, that Christ's death was prompted by a voluntary motive, is made in such a way as to enforce the conviction that it was a re-statement of a generally received doctrine with which the Christian atmosphere of his day had been already impregnated.

*Romans* v. 19: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." In these words we have another glimpse into the inner life of the Christian Founder as it appeared to the eye of St. Paul. Avoiding all reference to the theological part of the statement, the historical point on which our attention fastens is the fact of Christ's obedience; or, in other words, the fact that, in the performance of his earthly work, He believed Himself to be fulfilling a law. What renders this statement remarkable is its seeming divergence from the point considered in the previous passage. We there saw that the Christ of St. Paul felt his work to be voluntary; here, in the very same Chapter, and at the interval of only a few Verses, we are told that He felt his work to be an act of submission. Of course, even from the metaphysical side, there is no contradiction in these views. A man may be conscious that his life is the fulfilment of a law, and may at the same time be conscious of a delight experienced in its fulfilment; the fact that we act



from love does not hide from us that we are performing a duty. The union of these elements, however, is not likely to have arisen mythically; the thought is too subtle to be the spontaneous product of a primitive imagination: and the natural inference is that it was suggested by an actual historical experience. In our authorized portrait of the Master a historical experience is presented to us which singularly combines the Pauline elements. We have seen that, throughout the four Gospels, the fact is again and again thrust upon us, that the sacrifice of the Son of Man is not accidental, nor yet in the last result calamitous; but that it is something foreseen to be advantageous to mankind, and, as such, sought after by Him who was to bear it. Yet throughout these same Gospels there is continually superadded to the voluntary element in Christ's death, that other element of necessity which seems at first view to be its antagonist. The Son of Man is constantly impressed with the belief that his life-work is a *mission*; that, however freely He accepts it, He has not Himself been its sole originator; that He is fulfilling a plan which has been mapped out for Him, and obeying the behests of a Divine Father's will. In the obedience to that will He manifests a sense of perfect freedom, nay, experiences a thrill of deepest joy; not the less, however, is his work an act of obedience, and not the less is He Himself conscious of the fact. Nay, it is somewhat remarkable that the Gospel of John, in which the voluntary element in his sufferings is most strongly asserted, is precisely that Gospel in which the subjection to a Divine Will in these sufferings is most pronouncedly indicated; for if it is there that He declares the laying down of his life to be his own act and his own desire: it is there also that He refers that act to the accomplishment of a Divine commission, which He had received from his Father: "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

We cannot but remark that the attribution to the Christian Founder of the element of obedience is another point adverse to the mythical theory. We have already seen that Paul had within him both a Gentile and a Jewish consciousness; but to neither of these would it be natural that the idea of a Divine obedience should have suggested itself as a mythical imagination. The Gentile, above all things, revered power; and, therefore, the last thing which he would naturally have attributed to Divinity would have been the element of obedience. The Jew, above all things, revered law; and in the life of the creature he would have chiefly prized the obedience to law: but for that very reason he would have repudiated the notion that obedience to law belonged to a Divine life.<sup>1</sup> On each side of his mental culture the Apostle was excluded from the possibility of constructing out of his own imagination a Divine Life whose ideal of greatness consisted in his power to obey. Yet such an ideal St. Paul has actually given forth to the world, and held up before the eyes of men. He has exhibited as the object of his worship an ideal which must have been the natural contradiction of himself, the opposite of all that culture which he had received from birth, from education, or from social influence. The conclusion seems to be inevitable. If the Apostle did not derive his Christian ideal from within, he must have derived it from without; if there was nothing to create it in the depths of his own consciousness, it must have been imparted to his mind by the irresistible force of an external and historical atmosphere. The Christ whom Paul preached must have come into his soul because He was already in the air. He must have been adopted by the Christian consciousness through the atmosphere which He had Himself created. His reception by the spirit of man was the reception of a new

<sup>1</sup> The ideal "servant of God" of prophecy is not yet viewed as the Divine Life,

thought; and all new thoughts have their origin in some change of external relations. A man who, like Paul, represented the latest culture alike of the East and of the West, who had in him the distinctive elements both of the Gentile and of the Jew, was not likely to modify these elements without the constraint of some outward pressure; and the fact that he has modified them, the fact that he has even displaced them by a thought which is their contrary, must furnish a decisive evidence that he stood in the presence of a real historical change.

G. MATHESON.

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### CHRIST AND THE ANGELS.

#### HEBREWS ii. 1-9.

THIS passage commences with a practical exhortation to hold fast the word of salvation first spoken by the Lord, and communicated to the writer and his first readers by teachers who belonged to the circle of the personal disciples of Jesus. The admonition rests on the contrast between Christ and the Angels, already indicated in Chapter i.; but the precise form in which that contrast is practically used, calls for an additional argument (Verses 5-9), which is drawn from Psalm viii. The use made of this Psalm is the key to the whole passage, and must form the starting point of our exegesis.

The Author, in the usual manner of Rabbinical interpretation, fixes on an apparent paradox in the Old Testament text, and makes the solution thereof the key to the teaching of the Psalm. This paradox lies in the antithesis between the two statements: "Thou hast made him for a little time lower than the angels," and, "Thou hast put all things under his feet." The last statement it is urged (Verse 8) must be taken absolutely, including the angels, as well

as lower beings. We have therefore the doctrine of a temporary subordination of man to the angels, followed by his permanent elevation over them—a solution of the paradox which the writer seems to have facilitated by taking *ῥαχὺς* *τι* of the Septuagint in the temporal sense, “lower for a little time.” This, indeed, to a Greek reader would probably have appeared a more natural interpretation than that of the English Version. Taking with us this hint, let us proceed to discuss the position of the passage in the context.

The Epistle began with a statement of the superiority of the last-day Revelation through the Son to all former Revelations. The superiority of the Son is worked out in contrast to the angels. He is superior to them essentially; but what is specially urged is, that He is raised above them officially in his mediatorial kingship, which stands contrasted with their purely ministerial functions. The distinction between the natural preeminence of the preexistent Son and his conferred Messianic dignity is most clearly brought out in the phrase of Chapter i. Verse 4. “He is become superior to the angels.” But why so much of Christ and the angels. The reason is that the writer, like Paul (Gal. iii. 19) and Stephen (Acts vii. 38, 53), assumes that the Mosaic Revelation of law was conveyed to man by angels (Verse 2). In the New Testament passages just cited this opinion appears to be referred to as one generally admitted. In fact we find it even in the Rabbinical books; and that the doctrine was quite popular and universal, is plain from the circumstance that Josephus (*Antiquities*, Book xv. ch. 5, § 3) represents Herod as exciting the Jews to battle, by a speech in which he says that they have learned the holiest of laws from God through angels. In such a speech one does not introduce doubtful points of theology.

It is frequently assumed that this doctrine is not to be found in the Old Testament, and that reference to the



angels as appearing on Sinai is distinctly made for the first time in the Septuagint of Deuteronomy xxxiii. 2: "On his right hand his angels with Him." But, in reality, the presence of angels at the Theophany of Sinai is plainly taught in Psalm lxviii. 17. For the myriad chariots of God, which, according to this Psalm, accompany his manifestation alike on Sion and on Sinai, are the angelic host (2 Kings vi. 17). And it is a general idea of the Old Testament that in great theophanies God appears surrounded by a heavenly host, either chariots and horses (Hab. iii. 8; Isa. lxvi. 15), or, without a metaphor, "holy ones" (Zech. xiv. 5), "mighty ones" (Joel iii. 11). To our Apostle, who has already cited Psalm civ. to prove that angels appear in the form of winds and flames, the significance of the fire and tempest of Sinai, to which he recurs in Chapter xii. Verse 18, could not be ambiguous.

From the thesis that the angels were present on Sinai, it is easy to pass to the further proposition that the revelation on Sinai was given by angelic agency. According to the principles of the Old Testament no theophany is a direct manifestation of Deity to the physical senses of man. God is in the theophany; but He is there veiled from the eye of sense. No man can see God and live (Exod. xxxiii. 20). What is actually seen and heard, even in the directest Old Testament display of the Godhead, is not God Himself, but some part of the glorious state that surrounds the impenetrable majesty of his Presence. In this sense the Old Testament theophany is often spoken of as the appearing of the "glory of Jehovah," and the glory is habitually described as a kind of fiery brightness. But, according to Psalm civ. 4, the fire of the theophany may also be regarded as a form of angelic manifestation. To say that God appeared on Sinai in fire, and to say that He appeared surrounded by the angelic host, is just to say the same thing in two different ways. The angels, therefore, are not a

mere accessory of the theophany; they are its form, the medium and vehicle of the Divine manifestation. It is true that the Pentateuch does not introduce the angels at Sinai, and that it sometimes uses language which seems to go beyond the limits of the principles now laid down. But, on the other hand, the theophany of the Burning Bush, where all that appeared to the senses was a fire and a voice proceeding from the midst of the bush (Exod. iii. 2, 4), is distinctly called an angelic apparition. And long before the Epistle to the Hebrews was written it was a recognized principle of exegesis, that the more anthropomorphic expressions of the Pentateuch must be understood in a sense compatible with the principle of Exodus xxxiii. 20. Hence, when we read in Exodus xxiv. 10, that the elders saw the God of Israel, the Septuagint softens the expression, and makes them see only the place where God had stood, while the Targums introduce the usual phrase of the "glory" of God. There could be no dispute, then, between the Apostle and his readers as to the mediate character of the Sinaitic Revelation, and no difficulty in understanding that the phenomena of the theophany were angelic.

But the Apostle goes further than this. In Verse 2 of our Chapter the angels are regarded, not simply as the mouthpiece of God, but as his authoritative agents, every act of disobedience to their word being followed by a just recompence of reward. It appears, then, that, just as Christ is the King as well as the Prophet of the perfect Dispensation, so the angels were the administrators and governors of the Old Covenant. And this gives to the Apostle's argument the much more important turn that, with the superiority over the angels conferred on Christ in his mediatorial exaltation (*κρείττων γενόμενος*), the angelic sway in the old Dispensation ceases, and all the limitations therein involved fall away: "For not to angels hath He subjected the world to come, of which we speak" (Verse 5);

and so those who adhere to the angelic ordinances, to the neglect of the salvation spoken by Christ, cannot escape condemnation for disobedience (Verse 3).

Let us consider what Old Testament basis the Author has for this conception of angelic authority under the Old Covenant. The passage directly before his mind was presumably Exodus xxiii. 20 *seq.*, where we learn that Israel was guided in the wilderness by an angel. This angel is the organ of a continued theophany (compare Exod. xxxii. 34 with xxxiii. 14). God's name is within him (b'qirbo) and he is invested with authority to punish the people's sins. This angel of God's presence appears also in Isaiah lxiii. 9, as the leader who gives victory to Israel. And similarly, in Joshua v. 14 *seq.*, an angel (as he is expressly called in the exegesis of the Synagogue) appears to Joshua, and claims the dignity of prince of the host of Jehovah. These are conceptions which afford sufficient ground for the doctrine of angelic authority in the Old Dispensation; and their weight has been overlooked mainly in consequence of the unscriptural identification of the "Angel of the Presence" with the *λόγος ἄσαρκος*, the preexistent Son, which is now universally given up by scholars, and was certainly not acknowledged by the New Testament writers (compare for example, Acts vii. 35, 38, 53). The only point apparently novel in our Author's position is that he always speaks of angels as a plurality, while in the Old Testament the revealing and guiding angel is usually one. But the discrepancy is not absolute. In Genesis xviii., for example, Jehovah appears to Abraham by means of three angels. It is an army of fiery chariots and horses that appears to Elisha, and so forth. In fact the very word *Mal'akh*=angel, is in form an abstract noun, meaning primarily an embassy rather than a single ambassador. The individuality of the angel employed on any particular mission is not emphasized; and unity and plurality run into one another in the case of

angels with a freedom similar to that which we find in St. Mark v. 9 in the case of the unclean spirit whose name was Legion—"because we are many."

It is right to observe that neither the function of angels as ministers of Revelation nor their office as administrators of the Mosaic Covenant has, in the Old Testament, any dogmatic importance. The whole office of the angels flows simply from the incapacity of man, who is flesh, to come into direct contact with God, who is Spirit. The angels, therefore, stand between God and man, simply as ministers of his command. Positive independent importance they have none. What they do is done by God. When they speak they do not, like the prophets, use their own name, and say, "Thus hath God shewed me," but their words are spoken in the person of God. Their agency expresses only the negative side—the limitations of the Old Covenant, its character as a dispensation of the flesh. In many or even most passages there is nothing said of them which enables us positively to affirm that they are regarded as possessing personal identity. Satan appears in Job with a will of his own, but it is doubtful whether anywhere in the Old Testament as much is said of a good angel.

But just because they are figures that indicate the limitation of the Old Testament, they become important to the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, whose object is to contrast the defects of the Old Covenant with the perfection of the New. The abolition of the old limitations naturally presents itself as the emancipation of man from subordination to the angels; and even the Old Testament is made to furnish a proof that that subordination is inconsistent with the ultimate destiny of man to sovereignty over all the creatures.

This proof our Author found in Psalm viii. That the expression, "Thou hast made him lower than the angels" (*ἡλάττωσας αὐτὸν*) is not taken by the Apostle to denote



an inferiority of nature appears plain from the whole use of the correlatives *κρείττων* and *ἐλάττων* in our Epistle. Already in Chapter i. we have seen that Christ *becomes* (not is by essence) *κρείττων τῶν ἀγγέλων*, superior to the angels. No less certainly is it an official, not an intrinsic, relation that is designed in the words of Chapter vii. 7, *τὸ ἐλάττων ὑπὸ τοῦ κρείττονος εὐλογεῖται*: "The less is blessed of the greater." And so here the words mean nothing else than a subjection of man to the angels which cannot be permanent, because it is not consistent with the universal sovereignty which is man's creation destiny.<sup>1</sup>

"But now we do not yet see all things put under man." True! But for all that the powers of the new world (Chap. vi. 5) are at work, and the old Dispensation has passed away. For we see Him who for a little time was made less than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honour on account of the suffering of death which He underwent, that, by the grace of God, He might taste death for every man.

Wherein was Jesus set under the angels? Not simply in that He became man; for his manhood is as truly the ground of his exaltation as of his humiliation. It is to man as man that the Psalm ascribes the coronet of glory and honour—the exaltation over all creatures into which Jesus has entered. With Jesus, as with man in general, the inferiority to the angels is one of dispensation, not of nature. To be subordinated to the angelic dispensation is the same thing as to be "made under the law." Jesus shared man's humiliation, to win, not for Himself only, but for men his brethren, the destined glory. God brings many sons to glory along with Him, inasmuch as He that sanctifieth and

<sup>1</sup> Here again it is not unprofitable to compare Jewish teaching. According to Philo all mortal things were subjected to man at the creation, but the heavenly beings were exempted. Yet it is a Rabbinical idea, expressed in the Midrash Rabba on Genesis ii. 19, that Adam was superior to the angels in wisdom.

they that are sanctified are all of one piece (Verse 11). Thus the blessings of the Psalm do, in the world to come, fall to man; but they are earned for him by the man Christ Jesus who, tasting death for all (Verse 9), delivers us from the fear of death and so from bondage (Verse 15). And this blessing of deliverance from the bondage of the Old Covenant belongs even now to Christians, who have already tasted the powers of the world to come (Chap. vi. 5), who are regarded (in Chap. xiii. 14) as dissociated from the earthly theocracy and living in view of that which is to come. "The world to come" is in fact the equivalent of the Kingdom of God in the Gospel—already present among men, though hitherto it is an object of faith not of sight.

The conception of subjection to angels as the expression of the imperfect and servile state of God's people under the law is not familiar to us, and has not entered into current systems of theology. But it is by no means without Biblical parallels. Thus, in Galatians iv. St. Paul develops the doctrine that Jesus was made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. This is the same doctrine which our Epistle sets forth with the one exception that, where St. Paul says "made under the law," our Apostle says "made less than the angels." But look a little more closely at St. Paul's argument. In whose hands is the law under which the church in its pupillary state was kept (Gal. iii. 23; iv. 3)? The answer is found in Chapter iii. 19. The law was instituted through angels. Now, if this is so, must not St. Paul conceive of the angels as wielding authority over the infant heir, who is kept under the law as under tutors and stewards. He can hardly fail to do so; and, accordingly, we find that, with the expression "under the law," St. Paul uses as interchangeable another expression, "enslaved under the elements of the world" (Gal. iv. 3, comp. Verse 9). What are these elements

(στοιχεῖα)? The most plausible sense of the ambiguous word *στοιχεῖα* is that offered by Ritschl, who makes them "elemental powers." This rendering becomes probable by comparison with Colossians ii. 8, in which the *στοιχεῖα* appear to be not the elementary observances of the Mosaic dispensation, but the foundation of these observances—to be for the Old Testament what Christ is for the New. So again in Colossians ii. 20, the man who has died with Christ from the "elements of the world" no longer lives in the "world"; an argument which implies that these elements are not mere worldly rudiments of religion, but the elements that make up the *κόσμος* as such. St. Paul's doctrine, then, appears to be that subjection to legal ordinances and ceremonies rests on a bondage to elemental cosmic forces, as contrasted with the purely spiritual service of sons of God. The Old Covenant was administered by the fear of temporal judgments and the hope of temporal blessings. The saints of the Old Testament could not realize their spiritual calling save under earthly limitations and in the form of earthly rewards. The message of God to them came in fire and thunder, in whirlwind and tempest, in grand elemental displays that caused terror and enforced obedience by other than purely moral power. But, as we have seen, it is the doctrine of Psalm civ. that these winds and fires are angels. The spiritual forces sent forth by Jehovah clothe themselves in these phenomena. For example, the angels of the Law-giving are to be identified with the fire, lightning, and storm cloud of Sinai. We have seen how the Epistle to the Hebrews uses the doctrine to shew the mutable nature of the angels in contrast to the immutable perfection of the Son (Chapter i. 7). No doubt the same thought was associated in St. Paul's mind with the "cosmical elements." The subjection of the Old Dispensation to physical forces is but another form of its subjection to the angels of the Law. This view is confirmed, not only by the way in which Colos-

sians ii. 18, represents the worship of angels as an aberration—probably of Essene origin—connected with the service of the cosmic elements; but even more strikingly by Colossians ii. 15, which philologically appears to admit no other sense than that God divested Himself of the angelic authorities and powers, and made an open display of triumph over them in Christ. These angelic powers which God strips off like a garment can be no other than the angels who in the Old Covenant came between God and his people, but in the new Dispensation are superseded when Christ bursts the fetters of their law, triumphs over their terrors, and ascends to the seat of mediatorial sovereignty in victorious exaltation over all creatures, even over the angels to whom for a little time He was made subject.

W. ROBERTSON SMITH.

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## THE CORINTHIAN SADDUCEES.

### 1 CORINTHIANS XV.

IN a former paper I have endeavoured to reproduce certain opinions put forward by some church members at Corinth, opinions which called from the great Apostle of the Gentiles his famous Chapter on the Resurrection. I shall now attempt to reproduce the arguments with which he meets these opinions. If I can shew that these arguments really overturn the opinions delineated in my earlier paper, I shall do something to support the general truthfulness of that delineation.

Before openly challenging the enemy, St. Paul marshals some of his forces in battle array. He appeals to the fact that his readers have already accepted his teaching, and that, unless their faith is useless, they are day by day receiving salvation through the word he preached to them. Among



the chief points of this teaching were the death and resurrection of Christ in accordance with the ancient Scriptures and with the testimony of many witnesses.

That, after the lapse of about twenty-five years, a majority of the five hundred brethren were still living, seems to imply that the risen Saviour deliberately chose young men to be witnesses of his resurrection, men who might live long to testify it to others: just so, the date of the death of the chief Apostles proves that they were called by Christ while yet young. That St. Paul knew that a majority of the five hundred brethren still survived, proves that those who had actually seen the risen Lord were marked men in the early Church.

Having thus surrounded himself with numerous and well known witnesses, St. Paul summons before him the men whose opinions he is going to refute. They declare, without any qualification, that *dead men do not rise* again. He reminds them, as something beyond question, that this involves a denial of the resurrection of Christ. And this would imply that the Gospel preached by himself is an *empty* word, destitute of reality and truth, and that his readers' *faith is empty* credulity. Nay, more: if this denial be true, St. Paul and his colleagues are *found* out, found to be *false-witnesses*, false-witnesses not against man but *against God*. They have been telling lies about Him, and misrepresenting his dealings with mankind. This follows inevitably, as St. Paul again tells us, from the assertion that dead men are not raised. The same assertion involves, moreover, other consequences still nearer to the Corinthian Christians. If St. Paul's Gospel is an empty falsehood, his readers' belief of it is also an empty credulity. And, if so, they must be still in the moral state in which the Gospel found them, *i.e.*, still living *in* their old *sins*. But that they are not now living in their former sins they know by happy experience. For they now conquer the sins which once

conquered them. But could this moral victory result from mere credulity? No; the moral effects produced in them by the Gospel, effects which the noblest element of their being proclaims to be divine, prove that the word they have believed is true, at least in its main outlines. At any rate it is inconceivable that a gross misrepresentation of God's action towards men could produce the good effects which they see and feel. This powerful and double *reductio ad absurdum* is the Apostle's first argument.

We have here an admirable model for all Christian apologists. St. Paul appeals to subjective spiritual effects produced by objective historical testimony. The subjective effects and the objective testimony are not two parallel arguments, but are integral and mutually necessary parts of one great argument. For the spiritual effects would prove nothing about the resurrection, had they not been wrought by the agency of men who proclaimed the resurrection. On the same lines *we* must argue. There is abundant proof that this Epistle is from the pen of St. Paul: and we are therefore sure that he taught that Christ rose from the dead. The effect of his preaching, and that of men who shared his belief, is before us in the world to-day. Our only alternative is to suppose either that Christ actually rose, or that mankind was rescued from the destruction to which, in St. Paul's day, society was evidently hastening, by men whose confidence rested on a gross delusion. This combined argument is the strongest that can be adduced in a general way for the historical claims of Christianity. To those who have ventured to believe the Gospel of Christ, this argument is wonderfully confirmed by the inward victory over former sins which the Gospel conveys. On this immoveable ground the people of God may rest even in face of death. But if deliverance from sin and felt moral elevation be not obtained through the Gospel, I wonder not that the more general argument, though sufficient for our early confidence,

loses in many cases its force and leaves men in doubt of even the historical truth of Christianity.

Verse 18 contains another distinct argument, another *reductio ad absurdum*, in support of the main contention of this Chapter. It is directed against what both St. Paul and his opponents admitted to be a corollary of the denial of the resurrection, viz., denial of a life beyond death. The logical particle *ἀρα*<sup>1</sup> introduces a necessary inference from the assertion St. Paul combats; an inference so evidently untrue that it overturns the assertion which involves it. If there be no resurrection of dead men, and therefore no life beyond death, those who have gone down to the grave trusting in Christ, and belonging to Christ, have by their death lost all, and lost themselves. For, if the vulgar belief of Plato's day be correct, they have ceased to be, or have passed into a worthless shadow life. But this is inconceivable. So in all ages the death of the righteous has been a witness to a life beyond death. From their death-bed has shone forth the light of immortality.

The completeness of the argument of Verse 17, and the independent force of that of Verse 18, warn us not to take the latter as a mere completion of the former. There was surely no need to prove to Christians, unless their profession was false, that they were no longer in their sins. But no doubt the one argument suggested the other. If St. Paul's testimony be untrue, living believers of it are still in their former heathenism; and, if there be no life beyond death, departed believers are lost.

Verse 19 presents another independent argument, suggested by that of Verse 18. It also casts important light upon the opinions of the Corinthian deniers of the resurrection. The argument implies that these men had, or professed to have, *hope in Christ*, but a hope limited to the present life. In other words, their hope of eternal glory depended on

<sup>1</sup> See EXPOSITOR, *First Series*, vol. x. pp. 326.

their survival to the coming of Christ. They were *only* men who *in this life have hope in Christ*. If so, of all men they are most to be pitied. For they cherish hopes of eternal blessedness, but hopes which may at any moment be dashed to the ground by the hand of death. Especially to be pitied were men like the Apostle, whose life was one long deadly peril. But that his lot was not thus pitiable, St. Paul leaves his readers to infer. The deep admiration which his heroism evoked in their hearts, forbade the suggestion. Thus even the perils and uncertainties of the present life are to the Christian a testimony of a life to come.

Having adduced from the heart and experience of his readers proof of the truth of the Gospel proclaimed by himself and others, and having shewn the morally absurd consequences of denying a future life, St. Paul may now fairly indulge in an outburst of exultant assertion. But, as usual, his exultation is full of argument. That through one man we all go down into the grave, prepares us to believe that through another man we shall obtain life beyond the grave. That the resurrection of Christ is but the beginning of the resurrection of his people, is in harmony with St. Paul's constant teaching that they share all that He has and is. Indeed the resurrection of his people is involved in the complete victory over all enemies promised of old to the Messiah, and in the original destination of man to reign over all God's works. Not until our bodies are rescued from the iron grip of death can the Son present to the Father his finished work, viz., a once rebellious but now submissive world.

In both parts of Verse 22 the word *all* refers only to believers. For of them only does St. Paul think throughout this Chapter, and of them only are many of his assertions true. This limitation of view is very conspicuous in Verse 43. For none can say that the lost will rise *in glory and power*. And it is suggested at once by the words,



*they that are Christ's*, in Verse 23. In accord with this limited reference we find the indefinite πάντες, without the addition of ἄνθρωποι so conspicuous in Romans v. 12, 18, where the writer's mental horizon embraces the whole race, and where the saved are specially distinguished as *they who receive the free gift of righteousness*. If we took the word πάντες as denoting all mankind, we should have in the passage before us a plain declaration that all men will be saved, saved, we may almost say, at the general resurrection. For the word *life*, when spoken of the departed, denotes in the Bible always a state of happiness. But the reasons stated above forbid us to infer from Verse 22 anything about the ultimate state of those who die unforgiven.

Verse 29 may be rendered: "Else what will they do who are from time to time baptized on behalf of the dead ones? If, to speak generally, dead men are not raised, why are they even baptized on their behalf?" But the force of the argument contained in these questions, it is very difficult now to reproduce. For, not only is the argument directed against an error known to us only through St. Paul's refutation of it, but it also rests upon a custom unknown to us. All we can do is to try to find, or to suppose, a custom which might be described by the words *baptized on behalf of the dead ones*, and might be appealed to in proof of the resurrection of the dead or at least of life beyond death.

Of the remains of such a custom there are traces in the writings of the Fathers. Chrysostom tells us, in his homily on this passage, that the followers of the heretic Marcion, "When a catechumen dies among them, hide a living man under the bed of the dead one, and come to the dead man, and speak and inquire whether he wishes to receive baptism. Then, when he answers nothing, the hidden man says from beneath instead of him that he wishes to be baptized. And so they baptize him instead of the departed." Epiphanius, giving a traditional explanation of the verse

before us, says (*Heresies*, xxviii. 6) that the followers of Cerinthus "baptized others in the name of those who die without baptism, lest when they rose in the resurrection they should be punished for not having received baptism."

Now we can well conceive that this custom, which lingered only in small sects, was a perversion, both in practice and doctrine, of an innocent and appropriate custom existing at Corinth in St. Paul's day. We may suppose that, for those who died in faith but not yet baptized, others, baptized members or catechumens, underwent the rite, perhaps in some cases at the request of the dying man, as a testimony to the church and the world of the faith of the unbaptized departed; that thus they might have, though dead, a name and memorial place in the church. If baptism on a death-bed were not practised in the Apostle's days, (and we have no proof that it was,) this custom of vicarious baptism would easily arise, and would naturally fall into disuse when the practice of deathbed baptism became common. Such a custom might easily be described, without supposing any spiritual benefit to the dead man from the rite, by the words *baptized on behalf of the dead ones*. For the rite was performed to supply an omission on the part of the dead; and sometimes perhaps at his request. And it might easily degenerate into the foolish form described by Chrysostom and give rise to the false teaching mentioned by Epiphanius. But in itself it would be innocent and appropriate; and might be mentioned by the Apostle without disapproval. And it would be a strong testimony on the part of the dying man, and of those who took part in or approved of the rite, that there is a blessed life beyond death for those who die in Christ. For if, as some said, participation in the coming kingdom of Christ depends upon our surviving to his coming, the dead believer's faith has failed to save him. Surely no sacred rite would be performed for one who, by the loss of his bodily life, had lost his soul. If this custom was sanc-

tioned by the church at Corinth generally, St. Paul's argument was an appeal to the faith of the whole church as expressed in a common rite, against the teaching of a minority.

Similarly, Cicero appeals (*Tusculan Disputations*, i. 12) to funeral rites as proof of the general belief of mankind in a life beyond the grave.

The word ἐπεὶ introduces a *reductio ad absurdum*, as in Chapter v. 10 and Chapter vii. 14: and ὑπέρ is used nearly as in Philemon 13. St. Paul sees in thought men who are undergoing the rite, *who are being baptized on behalf of the dead*; and asks what they are going to do, what result they will attain. He gives force to his question by repeating it. The words, *If dead men are not raised*, state in full what is implied in the word *else*. The word ὅλως indicates that the clause in which it occurs is meant to be a statement of a universal principle. St. Paul asks, What result will those gain who have themselves baptized for the dead, if there be no resurrection of the dead? No answer can be given. For, as both the Apostle and his readers assume,<sup>1</sup> if there be no resurrection of the dead, there is no life beyond death. Consequently, the dead are lost. And the faith of the departed believers has been in vain. But, if so, to commemorate their faith by undergoing baptism for them, is absurd. Thus the custom in question, which was probably sanctioned by the whole church, attests the faith of the church in the safety of their departed brethren, and in the resurrection of the dead.

It is worthy of notice that this *argumentum ad hominem* is not put forward until by more solid arguments St. Paul has proved his point. After these arguments, the personal argument now before us is exceedingly appropriate to bring home to his readers the contradiction between the teaching St. Paul combats and the acknowledged practice of the church.

<sup>1</sup> See page 39.

After appealing to a well known and generally approved custom at Corinth, St. Paul now appeals to the conduct of himself and his colleagues. He thus takes up and develops the argument of Verse 19. If there be no future life, his own action is foolish in the last degree. For, if eternal glory depends on a continuance of the present bodily life, to expose that life to great peril, as he did every day, was infinite folly. But that the Apostle's heroism was not folly, he leaves his readers to judge. For this he can trust to the respect which he knows he has won in their hearts.

The *wild beasts* were probably bloodthirsty and violent men. For, if St. Paul had been cast into the arena to fight with actual wild beasts, his deliverance must have been little less than miraculous; and so terrible an event could not have been omitted from the catalogue of 2 Corinthians xi. 23 ff. We therefore infer, as would his readers unless they knew to the contrary, that this word, ἐθνηριμάχησα, is a forcible description of encounters with deadly enemies during the Apostle's long sojourn at Ephesus. It is a terrible picture of the perils which culminated in the uproar of Acts xix. 23 and caused the terror which still breathes in 2 Corinthians i. 9. With these passages the passage before us is an important coincidence. St. Paul was surrounded at Ephesus by men thirsting for his blood, men against whose fury he was as powerless as the men thrown to lions in the amphitheatre.

As illustrations of this use of the word we may compare the same word in the same sense in Titus i. 12, and 2 Timothy iv. 17. So Ignatius,<sup>1</sup> after speaking of being literally thrown to wild beasts, says, "From Syria all the way to Rome I am fighting with wild beasts, being bound to ten leopards, *i.e.*, a band of soldiers." Also,<sup>2</sup> "Guard against the wild beasts in human form."

In contrast to his own conduct, which is reckless folly if

<sup>1</sup> *Epistle to the Romans*, ch. v.

<sup>2</sup> *Epistle to the Smyrnans*, ch. iv.



there be no future life, St. Paul now depicts conduct which would be wise if the teaching of his opponents were correct. And, to make his readers feel the gross impropriety of this conduct, he puts it in the form of advice. "If there be no life beyond death it would be right for me to advise you to enjoy the present; for the present would be all you have to enjoy." Many of the readers would recognize in the words *Let us eat . . . we die* an exact quotation of Isaiah xxii. 13, a description of conduct at Jerusalem which the Prophet condemns. And to this condemnation by a Hebrew prophet St. Paul adds a warning from a heathen poet. He thus shews that this moral, or immoral, outflow of the teaching he combats is condemned not only by the voice of God speaking in the Jewish Scriptures, but by the common sentiment of men speaking in a Greek poet.

Nothing more is needed but sharp words of direct warning. And the earnestness of the warning suggests that it was needed, that the denial of the resurrection was already producing at Corinth immoral results. There were evidently some men there whose presence was a shame to the church. That St. Paul speaks, not to these men, but about them to the church, suggests that their case was almost hopeless. His words to the church have a parallel in Chapter v. 2.

St. Paul's disproof of the bold denial of the Corinthian Sadducees is now complete. This denial implies that the Gospel preached by himself and his colleagues is a lie against God, and that the Corinthian Christians are still living in sin; that their dead brethren have by their death lost all, and that consequently Christians, and especially those exposed to constant peril, are of all men most to be pitied. This denial is contradicted by a custom sanctioned in the church, and by the whole course of the Apostle's own life. And it tends towards conduct reprobated both by Jewish prophets and by Gentile poets. To tolerate the men who propound it is a disgrace to the church.

Having thus disproved the denial of the resurrection, St. Paul traces it to one of its sources, viz., a misconception of, or inability to understand, the process of the resurrection. Some men took for granted that, if the dead rise, their resurrection bodies must be similar to those now living on earth. And, because they could not conceive this, they denied the resurrection altogether. St. Paul reminds them that the infinite variety of Nature around us proclaims the folly of those who suppose that resurrection bodies must needs be the same as those laid in the grave; and that, in addition to this infinite variety on earth, we have shining above us in heaven a multitude of beautiful objects altogether unlike all the varieties of things on earth. Moreover, development is the order of God. Even Adam in his early purity had not such a body as God designed to be his eternal dwelling-place. This will be ours through our relation not to the first, but to the second, Adam. So absolute is the contrast between the earthly and the heavenly that even those who survive the coming of Christ will need to be changed. Not until mortality has been laid aside will the final victory be gained.

This whole argument rebukes the teaching, common in all ages and places, that our resurrection bodies will consist of the same material particles as do those we now wear; and it thus removes a serious objection to the resurrection based on this supposition. Yet our future bodies will bear some definite, though now inconceivable, relation to those we have now. For, in a manner analogous to the grain of wheat and the rising blade, *each* will receive *his own body*.

We also learn that Adam, as he sprang from the Creator's hands, although unstained by sin, was not perfect, even as touching his body. For him, as for us, maturity of manhood is the prize of battle and victory.

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## BRIEF NOTICES.

CANONICITY: *A Collection of Early Testimonies to the Canonical Books of the New Testament, based on Kirchhofer's "Quellensammlung."* By A. B. Charteris, D.D. (Edinburgh: Wm. Blackwood and Sons.) Dr. Charteris has rendered no slight service to scholars by collecting in a single volume the testimony to the authorship and authenticity of the several New Testament Scriptures, and to their early admission into the Canon, which lies scattered through an innumerable array of volumes, many of which are rare or difficult of access. He has largely added to the service by characterizing and weighing the leading authorities he quotes in an introductory chapter which is very ably written, and shews a just discrimination of their respective values.

THE SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE OF SACRIFICE (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark) is very carefully and thoroughly discussed by the Rev. Alfred Cane, B.A., from its first revelation to the Patriarchs, through its differentiations in the teachings of Moses and the Prophets, to its consummation and apotheosis in the Sacrifice of the Cross. It is long since this weighty theme has been so weightily treated. And the conclusions at which Mr. Cane arrives are none the less valuable because they are strictly orthodox.

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST. By the Rev. A. M. Fairbairn, D.D. (London: Hodder and Stoughton.) These "studies" are familiar to the readers of the *Expositor*, for they first appeared in this Magazine, although by some oversight that fact is not mentioned either in Preface or Titlepage; and, in this collected form, will no doubt receive a hearty welcome from them. That sacred Life is simply inexhaustible in its suggestions; and, though of late years it has been more largely and ably set forth than ever, there was ample room for Professor Fairbairn's thoughtful and brilliant sketches of its main movements and events. The only objection ever alleged against these studies, even by the most exacting critic, was that they were "too rhetorical." Let it be granted that they are rhetorical. But let those who object to them on that ground, observe that Dr. Fairbairn's is not the base rhetoric often employed to hide want of thought or poverty of thought, but the noble rhetoric which is alive with thought and imagination to its utmost and

finest extremities. Let them also consider how facts and truths of the gravest moment are to be driven home to the general mind otherwise than by noble and impassioned eloquence. And let them turn to such a "study" as that on "the Resurrection," and tell us where the objections to that historical fact have been more ably and exhaustively stated, or more logically and triumphantly refuted.

THE INCARNATE SAVIOUR: A LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST. *By the Rev. W. R. Nicoll, M.A.* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark.) It is hardly fair to Mr. Nicoll, though there is no help for it, to bring his "Life" into such close contact with Dr. Fairbairn's "Studies"; for his work lacks the passion, power, and imagination by which that of the learned and eloquent Professor is characterized. Somewhat slender, if not slight, in substance, it nevertheless moves on the right lines; for, like Dr. Fairbairn's "studies," it is an honest attempt to deal with the inner rather than the outer life of the Lord, to set forth the progress of his thoughts, the unfolding of the truths to which He came to bear witness, rather than to depict the external conditions amid which He moved. The simple and unlettered Christian will find it a very agreeable and instructive book, for there are some vital signs in the style in which it is written; while even the scholar, weary of sceptical hypotheses and logical refutations of them, will be refreshed as he reads, and may find here and there a hint not without critical or exegetical value.

The last contribution to the CAMBRIDGE BIBLE FOR SCHOOLS is a Commentary on the *First Book of Samuel*, by the *Rev. A. F. Kirkpatrick, M.A.*, which is quite worthy of its place in the series. The exegetical notes are sensible and helpful; while the Introduction compresses much useful information into narrow compass, and is now and then bright with touches of picturesque description.

"THESE SAYINGS OF MINE," by *Rev. Joseph Parker, D.D.* (London: Richard Clarke), is really a popular exposition of St. Matthew i.-vii. And very able and powerful the exposition often is; one of its chief excellences being that all the truths suggested to Dr. Parker's mind by the Scripture in hand are duly related to the thought and experience of to-day, and often interpreted by them. The style both of thought and expression is masculine and robust,



degenerating at times—for even Dr. Parker has the defects of his qualities—into coarseness. But no man can bring an unprejudiced mind to these expository discourses without being healthily impressed by them, and at times even charmed by unexpected glimpses of truth, and by equally unexpected delicacies of insight and touch.

ECCE VERITAS, or Modern Scepticism and Revealed Religion Weighed. *By Rev. J. Hiles Hitchens, D.D.* (London: Haughton & Co.) This is not a book that calls for review. Its calibre may be inferred from the following citation, taken from Chapter I.:

“We say to those who to-day heap their valueless scorn upon the Bible—first, be good enough to find a volume that can take its place, before you deprive humanity of this peerless production. Ye very wise men, who look down with supercilious scorn from your self-constructed pedestals of sceptical indifference, and pity the credulity of the earnest believer in the truths of revelation, how is it that ye have not yet furnished a book worthy to lie by the side of this majestic book? Would not your position be more secure and your judgment more respected, if you could point to a volume containing as many specimens of elevated genius and exquisite elegance; a volume as capable of captivating the taste, electrifying the affections, subduing the heart, and elevating the moral nature; a volume that has evoked as many thousands of books for and against it, in confirmation and in confutation of its claims? You cannot. You gladly would if you could. Meanwhile you have tried the cowardly trick of endeavouring to elevate human intellect by ineffectual efforts to pick to pieces what you could not construct. You have aimed to ruin what you cannot rival, to mar what you cannot match, to uproot what you cannot understand. With what result? Poor pigmy worms! ye thought to thrash the mountain level, but ye have sorely bruised yourselves; whilst the Bible still,—

Like some tall cliff that lifts its reverend form,  
Swell from the vale, and midway leaves the storm;  
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.”

This is but one of many specimens of “the elevated genius and exquisite elegance” with which this volume abounds. And, after reading it, no man can well deny that Dr. Hitchens has produced a work which has at least one characteristic of a great book: it is all of a piece. But whether it is more vulgar in thought or in rhetoric, or whether its tone or its spirit is the more crude and uncharitable, it is difficult to determine.

## GOD IN NATURE AND IN HISTORY.

### CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARD A TRUE THEORY OF REVELATION.<sup>1</sup>

THE process of Revelation must, doubtless, be mysterious to us so long as we know God only "in part"; and that is equivalent to saying, so long as this world shall last—perhaps even so long as man continues finite. Revelation is the meeting of God and man, their coming into relationship, and man's recognition of this fact. Hence the process of Revelation can be clearly understood only in so far as both terms of the relationship are clearly understood. If, therefore, we know God only "in part," our knowledge of the process of Revelation can be no more than partial either. There is, therefore, no hope of closing finally the question of Revelation. Yet as our knowledge of God increases in breadth and clearness, so ought our knowledge of the manner of his self-revelation to grow. We are not entitled to give up the problem because it can never be solved save "in part;" it is our duty to be constantly revising our approximations, and, if possible, bringing them still nearer the truth. It is culpable negligence on our part to rest satisfied with any one approximation, if there seem to be materials for a more correct solution.

What, then, is the problem of Revelation? We understand it to be this: What took place in the mind of Moses,

<sup>1</sup> An earlier contribution to this Theory—which, unhappily for us, the learned author did not live to complete—will be found in an essay on "The Call and Commission of Isaiah" contained in Vol. xi. of the *First Series* of this Magazine. This paper, however, like that, is complete in itself, though both were intended to be parts of a larger whole; but this, alas! unlike that, cannot have the advantage of the author's corrections.

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David, Isaiah, etc., when they said, "The Lord spake unto me." What was their experience at these times? and specially, what was the particular point in their experience which made them ascribe what they felt, and the new knowledge that they gained, to God? The very nerve and core of the problem is, How did they apprehend God? What led them to attribute their experiences to God? To state in terms of ordinary experience how inspired men felt, and what passed in their minds, when they received a revelation, would be to give a complete explanation of the process of Revelation.

The object of these "Contributions" is to analyse some instances of the apprehension of God on the part of Old Testament writers, with a view to lay bare their real psychological character, and thus to obtain some answer to the above questions. The instances will be chosen chiefly from the Psalms. For we think that if light regarding the process of Revelation is to be looked for from any part of Scripture, it is from the Psalms. In the Law and in the Prophets, we have simply the results of Revelation presented to us in the finished state, as it were, as *revealed truth*, in the form of divine laws or of definite divine messages. It is only, or at all events, it is chiefly, in the Psalms that we are permitted to look into the minds of inspired men whilst apprehending God—only here that we see Revelation *in the making*. The Psalms introduce to us the subjects of Revelation telling their own experiences, and hence the process is more open to analysis here than anywhere else.

## I. ON THE APPREHENSION OF GOD IN NATURE.

We begin with some investigations on a well-defined group, the Nature-Psalms as they are called. Psalm xxix. gives us the celebrated description of a thunderstorm. The writer is watching the storm as it passes over Pales-

time from north to south; he sees the trees splintered and uprooted (Verses 5, 9b), the forked flames of the lightning (Verse 7), the pouring rain (Verse 3), the very mountains appearing to skip like "the wild bull" (Verse 6), by reason of the accompanying earthquake (Verse 8); and the wild cattle in their terror, prematurely giving birth to their young (Verse 9): and it has been the "voice of Jehovah"<sup>1</sup> that has done it all. He therefore calls on "the sons of God" (Verse 1) to praise Jehovah as He deserves—Jehovah, in whose palace everything that is, cries, Glory!

The Psalm describes the thunderstorm as a theophany, therefore. In all the various phenomena the Writer apprehends Jehovah's presence; he ascribes them all to the "voice of Jehovah"—a phrase which is six times repeated, and evidently applied to the peals of thunder. The chief interest of the piece in connection with the theory of Revelation will therefore centre in the explanation of this phrase. In what sense is the thunder "the voice of Jehovah"? What thought does the Psalmist desire to express by that phrase? It is perhaps not unlikely that, even before this particular Poet used it, the phrase, "the voice of Jehovah," was in Hebrew a current name for the thunder: at the same time there is nothing to prove that; and, if it were proved, the question would still remain: what fact was meant to be expressed when first the phrase was coined? How did the first apprehension of God in the thunder take place? and what was the real character of that apprehension?

We venture to lay down the thesis, that the Poet did not mean thereby to give us any information about the physical cause of the thunder, that the state of mind from which the apprehension of God resulted was not that of mere scientific curiosity about the cause of the observed pheno-

<sup>1</sup> The force of the following analysis will not be at all weakened if any one prefers to render קול יהוה with Ewald, "Hark! Jehovah is . . ."



mena. He does not mean, we think, to say that the thunder is caused by God speaking, just as the articulate sounds called words are produced by men speaking. Had the phrase "the voice of Jehovah" been meant as an explanation of the cause of the thunder, it would have been a degradation of God to the level of man, by bringing Him within the sphere of the sensible, by co-ordinating Him with the creatures, and thus destroying his infinite and transcendent character. One sound, a word, is produced by a man; another, inarticulate, is the roar of a lion; a third, thunder, is God's voice. If so, as the sounds are co-ordinate in the sensible sphere, so must their causes be; and if man, lion, and God, are co-ordinate, they are mutually limiting, and God must be finite. Or even if it be argued that this metaphysical difficulty would not occur to the Hebrew, and if it be held notwithstanding that he may have actually have fancied the thunder to be caused by God speaking, still the real question is: Why did he suppose that it was God who spoke? Why did he not attribute the sound to any one of a multitude of causes that would at once occur to his imagination? If he merely wanted a cause for the thunder, why did he fall upon Jehovah, and not on a special genius of the thunder? Or why did he not call the thunder the voice of the clouds? The fact that he selected Jehovah as the cause, shews that there was more in the inner experience of the Poet than a mere scientific curiosity. Or if it be said that the Hebrews recognized God in all that happens, believed God to be the one Agent everywhere working (see below on the Nineteenth Psalm), and that of course therefore the thunder was his work, the question is only pushed back a step, not answered. The only question relevant to the theory of Revelation is, How did the Hebrews come to ascribe all events to God? Why did they not ascribe the motions of the clouds to the clouds, the motion of the stars to the stars themselves, and so on? Or, if the half-savage mind

has a natural tendency to personify, why did they not, like the Greeks, attribute each motion of cloud, fountain, river, and tree, to its own special nymph or genius? The fact to be explained is that the Hebrews apprehended *the one Jehovah* in all these motions; and that fact can never be explained from the mere scientific curiosity, natural to man, regarding the causes of phenomena.<sup>1</sup> In later ages, no doubt, when everything suffers by becoming conventional, people may have understood the consecrated phrase, "the voice of Jehovah," as expressing the actual way in which the thunder was caused; and then the first shock of the conflict between Science and Religion would be felt when it was hinted that the thunder was caused by perfectly impersonal agencies, such as discharges of electricity; but this cannot have been the original meaning.

The phrase, as we see, is the central expression in a context, not only not scientific, but highly poetical; and, more than that, it is the centre of an elevated religious hymn of praise. The Writer is evidently in a state of enraptured religious communion; and his words must be explained as the outcome of that state. He is not in the passionless and prosaic state of seeking an explanation of the thunder; he is expressing religious experience of the most exalted kind. It is not his reason or understanding that is active; but, as the whole hymn shews, his spirit, his religious nature. The phrase coined on the occasion, or at least selected as most appropriate to the occasion, must accordingly be meant to shew *the effect produced in his religious experience* by the sight of the thunderstorm. The thunder is Jehovah's voice to him, because in the thunder

<sup>1</sup> All the attempts of the Evolutionist school to explain the origin of Religion from the "causal impulse" make shipwreck on this same rock. The scientific impulse is totally different in kind from the religious; mere curiosity about causes can never grow into religious emotion. The nations most advanced in religion, like the Hebrews, have been all but totally without scientific abilities. See Pfleiderer: *Religionsphilosophie nach geschichtlicher Grundlage*, p. 318 seqq.

Jehovah speaks to him, because the effect of the thunder is an awakening of his religious nature, a setting of him face to face with God, an excitation of religious emotion. Each peal that echoes and re-echoes from heaven to earth stirs the Poet's inmost religious nature, that shrine of his heart where Jehovah alone dwells. The deep thrill that passes through his soul as he stands watching the storm could be produced by Jehovah alone. It is an emotion essentially religious, not æsthetic, and not scientific; and this he can express in no other way than by saying that Jehovah caused it. The emotion is, he feels, the same in kind as that which arises within him when God deigns to visit his soul with his Divine Presence.

The evidence for Jehovah's connection with the thunder is, therefore, not of a kind that science can criticise, and any conflict between science and religion in the matter arises from misunderstanding. Science can neither prove by Bridgewater Treatises, nor disprove by *Systèmes de la Nature*, the Psalmist's assertion that the thunder was to him Jehovah's voice; because what he means to assert is not anything as to the physical cause of the thunder, but simply the fact that his spirit recognized and apprehended God in the thunder, that he was thrown into a state of religious emotion by it. The only verification of his words that is possible is to be had by letting other such spiritual men as he contemplate the same magnificent scene, and seeing whether they experience the same religious emotions. The thunder is admittedly a natural event, produced according to ascertainable laws; but if, in connection with it, the spectator is thrown into a state of religious emotion, then it is a theophany. Thus far, then, we are forced to the conclusion that a revelation of God is to be identified not by anything extraordinary in the *physical causation* of the event which is its medium, but simply by the presence or absence of religious excitation.

This explanation may be set in a clearer light if we refer briefly to the similar phrase "the mount of God" applied to Horeb (Exod. iv. 27; xviii. 5; Num. x. 33; 1 Kings xix. 8). This mountain was evidently sacred in the estimation of the Israelites long before Moses stood upon it to receive the Law. Already, during the residence of Moses in Midian, we find it called "the mount of God" (Exod. iv. 27).<sup>1</sup> What can this name mean? What should make the Israelites fancy that God was connected with this mountain in any more special way than with others? There was nothing that we know of in the patriarchal history to indicate such a connection. It was not that God had ever appeared there to their forefathers; and yet they seem to have regarded it as in some sense God's seat; for in many poetical passages (*e.g.*, Deut. xxxiii. 2; Judg. v. 4; Ps. lxviii. 7; Hab. iii. 3), when God is represented as interfering to help or save his people, He *comes from Sinai* to the place where He is to meet them. And when Elijah, disheartened by ill-success, flees from his work (1 Kings xix.), and demands to see God again, it is to Sinai that he has recourse. Now it cannot have been in any mere physical or material sense that they conceived God to be seated there. True religious feeling cannot conceive that God is limited to a certain spot of earth. Or even if these Hebrews did think so, what we have to do with is the reason why they at first formed this opinion; for it is there that the original apprehension of God lay. Any mere visible or sensible connection of the mount with God in the pre-Mosaic times, by a visible theophany or any supernatural character of the mount itself, is against the whole history. Horeb can have been the seat of God only in the same way as the thunder was his voice. It was his seat

<sup>1</sup> Moreover the demand made for leave to go and worship God in the Desert (Exod. v. 1; x. 8, etc.), implies the sacredness of the mountain, even before the Exodus.

because one could not look on it without having experience of God, without feeling the same awe and reverence as are felt at the contemplation of God, the same emotions in general as characterize communion with God. The natural qualities of the mountain are therefore the explanation of its being called "the mount of God," just as the natural emotional qualities of the thunderstorm explain its being called God's voice. The grandeur and majestic appearance of the mountain, especially conceivable if the modern Jebel Serbal be, as Lepsius, Ebers, and others think, the mount of God (see *Stanley's* "Sinai and Palestine," pp. 40 ff., 72 ff.) fill the beholder with religious emotions. Where the human soul has, as it were naturally and inevitably, the emotions that are connected with the apprehension of God, there is the seat of God. To say that a certain place is God's seat, or home, either means that the place is such that religious emotions are inevitably raised (in persons susceptible of such emotions) by being there, and looking on the place; or it is to localize God, and so to make an idol of Him. God's seat is not where He can be seen by the bodily eye; He is invisible Spirit; but where He can be seen by the spiritual eye, the only organ whereby He can be perceived at all. To perceive God is to be religiously moved; and his seat is where we are religiously moved.

We are thus led, in seeking an explanation of the apprehension of God in splendid natural phenomena, to think of spiritual facts perfectly well-known to us; viz., of the intimate connection between the highest æsthetic perceptions and the religious emotions. The two are such that, given a person susceptible of religious emotion, the lower may at any moment pass into the higher. We have only to recall Coleridge's "Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni," to get a modern example of what is meant:



“O dread and silent mount ! I gazed upon thee  
Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,  
Did'st vanish from my thought : entranced in prayer  
*I worshipped the Invisible alone.*”

The state of mind indicated in the choice of these names, “the mount of God,” “the voice of Jehovah,” is therefore one in which the natural emotions connected with beauty and grandeur, in mountain or in storm, are at once pushed beyond mere aesthetics, and become religious emotions ; and then, just as the outward object which gives us the feelings of hardness, extension, and colour, etc., is called matter, so the outward scenes and events in connection with which religious emotions arise are called theophanies. Again, therefore, we argue that the distinguishing characteristic of a place or event in which God is apprehended is not anything supernatural in its phenomenal character, but merely the power which it has of arousing religious emotions and perceptions in religious men.

This interpretation is further confirmed by the parallel case of Bethel, which receives its name, “House of God ” (Gen. xxviii. 19), in commemoration of an inward experience of a distinctly religious kind. Jacob changes the name of Luz to Bethel because he there experienced communion with God. For is not the meaning of his dream-revelation this, that he finds God nearer to him than he had thought, even after leaving his home ; that he finds a constant spiritual method still left him whereby he may enter into God's presence and have communion with Him at any time ? Clearly the whole fact on Jacob's side is the presence that night of the inward emotions and feelings which we associate with communion with God. That this communion took place not in the waking state, but in a dream, does not alter the fact. When he calls the place “House of God,” he intends to keep in mind that here he had communion with God. That experience shewed

him that the place was holy ground, that God dwelt there ; and in this way the place was consecrated as a place of Divine worship for after ages.

Similar reasoning will apply to Peniel or Penuel, "the face of God" (Gen. xxxii. 30), and to the custom of calling the Temple "the house of the Lord." It was so, because to go into the Temple and to be present at its services was, almost necessarily, to experience the religious emotion of God's nearness and presence.<sup>1</sup> Thus a church is to a Christian now-a-days as much a house of God as the Temple was to an Israelite.

Psalm xix. is another important "Nature Psalm." The glories of the fresh morning are its subject. "The heavens are telling (מִסְפָּרִים) true present, of pictorial presentation, not "tell" of habitual action, which would have been perfect or imperfect) the glory of God, and the firmament shewing forth the work of his hands. Day unto day is pouring out (*lit.* "welling up" as a fountain) speech, and night unto night declaring (*lit.* "breathing out") knowledge. There is no speech, and there are no words ; their voice is not heard (*i.e.*, there is no audible sound). Over all the earth is their voice (reading קֹלָם with Olshausen and Gesenius for קוֹם) gone out, and to the end of the world their words ; for the sun he has set a tent in them. And he is like a bridegroom from his chamber (*i.e.*, the morning sun in freshness and gladsome vigour of youth is like a young man newly-married, and at the summit of his strength and happiness) ; he rejoices like a warrior to run

<sup>1</sup> It is but one step from this point to the explanation of such late phrases as that of Jonah iii. 3, עִיר גְּדוֹלָה לֵאלֹהִים "a divinely great city ;" Acts vii. 20, ἀστέριος τῷ Θεῷ, "divinely fair. Of course, in order to arouse the emotions of awe and reverence that are connected with God's presence, a thing must be somewhat out of the ordinary ; mere commonplace everyday sights cease to arouse any emotion. Hence things extraordinary are called "divine," as above, *i.e.*, such as might well give the emotions of God's presence.

his course (not "race": אֶרֶץ=path, orbit). From the end of the heavens is his out-going, and his circling course to their other end: and nothing is hid from his heat."

Great violence is done to this passage when it is made into an argument from design, or into any other kind of argument, to prove God's existence;<sup>1</sup> and just as much when it is made a mere æsthetic perception of natural beauty. Neither the one nor the other is at all in point here. The Psalmist is not philosophizing, nor is he merely enjoying beauty: he is in a religious state. It is not that his intellect is moved to argue, "There must be a God who made all this"; nor is it merely that his æsthetic faculty is moved to luxuriate in grandeur; his spirit, his religious nature is moved: he has an immediate apprehension, an intuition of God. He is looking on the freshness of the morning, and all that he sees is telling of God, bringing God before him. His soul is filled with the thought of God; the sky, the day, the night, the sun,—all are God's means of revelation; for, as he looks on them, he is at once in communion with God. There is no voice, no audible word; and yet he has Jehovah as present to him as if there were. Nor is this presence of Jehovah in nature's beauty any mere subjective fancy of his. Jehovah is not only present to him there and then; he knows that the same experiences are possible to every one who looks on the same or similar scenes. He cannot suppose them looking on such beauty without seeing God. Jehovah's revelation is for every one: his voice is gone out through all the earth. His teaching, his self-revelation, is, or may be, unless men

<sup>1</sup> Addison's rendering

"What, though in solemn silence all  
Move round this dark terrestrial ball;  
\* \* \* \* \*  
In *raison's* ear they all rejoice," etc.,

is totally wrong. It is just to the reason that they have no voice; their voice is to the spirit, the religious nature.

hinder it, as universal as the circling visits of the sun, which passes over the whole earth in its daily course.

It is this fact, that the Poet is in a state of religious emotion while looking on nature's beauty (cf. Coleridge, "I worshipped the Invisible alone"), which explains the possibility of his passing over at once to the second half of his hymn (whose subject, the praise of God's law, seems incongruous with the first half), and makes it at least quite possible that the two halves are really one Psalm. The praise of the Divine Law, that is the prophetic "instruction" by spoken or written word, would not be felt by a poet in the state described to be at all incongruous with his contemplation of natural beauty. His state of mind when thinking of God's law, and when looking on natural beauty, was essentially the same. Both were states of immediate apprehension of God; both were states of communion with God. Hence there need have been no abruptness to him in the transition from nature's glories to the glory of God's teaching. We have now lost this youthful freshness and naturalness of emotion in regard to natural beauty, and have the experience of communion with God usually only when meditating on properly spiritual subjects, only in the stiller moments of prayer and contemplation. Hence we feel the transition abrupt. But the Hebrew saint *had such communion when contemplating natural beauty*. God revealed himself to the Hebrew saint in natural beauty; or, to state the same thing from the other side, he apprehended God present in his soul when looking on the Beautiful. Hence even the prayer for preservation from "secret faults" and "presumptuous sin" (Verses 12, 13), is not in any way incongruous with the beginning of the Psalm. If the first half of the Psalm were a philosophical argumentation up to God, or if it were merely an æsthetic perception, then there would be abruptness in the transition to the Divine Law, and incongruity between the

parts ; but the beauty of nature brings an *immediate apprehension* of God to the Poet, not an argument ; and an apprehension *of God*, not merely a perception of beauty. God is revealed by nature's beauty in the same way as by the Divine Law.

In Psalm viii. we find the Poet looking on the nocturnal heavens ("moon and stars," Verse 3), and finding that these bring God before him. God's glory is all over the heavens as it is all over the earth. His heart is filled with the idea of God's glory as thus shewn ; and he wonders that this mighty and glorious One should ever "mind" men or visit them. The contrast between the calm, pure, silent stars, and noisy, bustling, paltry, and sinful men is so glaring ! And yet God has minded men and cared for them. He has given man dominion over all his other works, has made him second only to Himself in the empire of the universe (Verse 5, read "*for thou hast made him lack but a little of the divine*," *i.e.*, hast made him next lower than Thyself, and only a little lower), with all things under his feet, as God's chosen companion. Whatever be the meaning of תָּנָה (Verse 1), the context seems to make it clear that the English version "set thy glory above the heavens," and the similar ones of Ewald and Delitzsch, must be wrong, because the idea of God's glory being greater and more exalted than the heavens (cf. Ps. xxxvi. 5), is not in point here. What the context demands is an objective glory visible *on the heavens*, parallel to the glory of Jehovah's Name on the earth, in the first clause. Perhaps Hitzig's rendering is the best : "whose glory is extended over the heavens."

This Psalm adds but little that is new for our purpose, but it fully confirms the results we have already arrived at. The sight of the nocturnal sky is to this Writer an immediate apprehension of God, as the sight of the sky in its



morning glories was to the writer of Psalm xix. He looks on them, and at once sees God, and begins to contrast his all-glorious nature, as revealed by these works of his, with the paltriness and meanness of the inhabitants of the earth. It is not anything peculiar or unusual in the physical aspect of the heavens that makes him see God's work in their beauty. It is simply the ordinary perception of beauty become, in a religious man, a religious emotion, an apprehension of God. The ordinary beauty of the heavens is, so to speak, a constant theophany. There is no arguing up to God needed; the intuition is immediate. The Psalmist's religious nature is moved when he looks, without the intervention of any process of argument; and this fact can be expressed only by saying that the outward thing seen is God's glory, and God's majesty, spread out all over the heavens.

Psalm civ. is a highly developed "Nature Psalm" of considerable length, but being almost exclusively descriptive, it throws less new light on our problem than might have been anticipated. Verses 2-4 are perhaps the most important. "*Who clothest thyself with light as with a mantle—spreadest out the heavens as a tent-curtain. Who layeth the beams of his upper chambers (i.e., "state-rooms," the reception rooms in ancient Eastern houses being usually the ὑπερφῶα, cf. Acts i. 13; xx. 8) on the waters; who maketh the clouds his chariot, who marcheth on wings of wind; who maketh winds his messengers, flaming fire his servants.*"<sup>1</sup> The light, then, is God's robe, the sky is his tent-curtain; his state-rooms are founded on the waters, i.e., on the heavenly ocean, the "waters above the firmament" of Genesis i. 7 (cf. Gen. vii. 11), whence also the rain comes down (Verse 13); "*who watereth the hills from his upper*

<sup>1</sup> Regarding the last verse, see Perowne, in *THE EXPOSITOR, First Series*, vol. viii. p. 461.

*chambers.*” Now in what sense are these metaphors to be understood? Surely the Poet cannot intend anything so totally insipid and meaningless as Dr. J. H. Newman (quoted by Perowne *in loco*) puts into Verse 4, viz., that the winds and the lightning are set in motion by the agency of angels behind the scenes. This is “the letter that killeth” *ad nauseam*, and even Dr. Newman’s eloquence cannot hide the grotesqueness of the conception. If so, we must go on to suppose that God really uses the sky as a tent-curtain, and shelters Himself behind it; that the light is his robe, so that if we analysed light properly we should find Him within it; that the thunder is caused by his speaking, and so on. Realism like this forgets that there is such a thing as poetry, and degrades all to the level of its own prose. But, more than that, it soon ends in mythology pure and simple. It makes God merely a man, magnified a little, but still subject to limitations like ourselves, occupying space, co-ordinate with other finite beings. On this side of the sky are men in their tents; on the other, God in his.

But no less prosaic and no less mistaken is the modern theologico-scientific explanation, which finds in these metaphors nothing more than an affirmation that God is the first cause of all the phenomena of nature. If what the Poet is concerned to do is to give a statement of the real first cause of all phenomena,—light, wind, fire, rain, etc.,—then his object is a scientific one, and by his science he must stand or fall. But we have seen that Verses 3 and 13 unquestionably imply as their basis the old Hebrew idea of an ocean above the firmament. Now science knows nothing of the existence of any such ocean, or, rather, it confidently denies its existence. Hence either the Poet is not concerned about scientific facts at all, or he is guilty of a mistake.

It is surely plain from the whole character of the Psalms, and of the Hebrew nation as a whole, that their chief con-

cern was not about science, but about religion. Hence the question for us to ask is not, What physical facts lie behind these metaphors? But, as everywhere in the Bible, What *divine revelation* is contained in them? What religious ideas do they express? Till the contrary is proved, we shall hold that the Bible is a revelation of saving truths, not of science. And the religious ideas intended by the metaphors before us can be nothing else than those which we have found in the Psalms already considered. The light is God's robe, because it suggests God to the religious mind. The heavens are his tent, his state-rooms are fixed above the starry firmament, just in the same way and to the same effect as the thunder is his voice, viz., in so far as no religious person can look on their grandeur and majesty *without being religiously moved*. The winds, and the fire, and the lightning are God's messengers and servants, because, when men look on the lightning, or are visited by the tempestuous wind, their hearts at once thrill down to the roots. The wind and the storm seem to speak straight home to the heart, and thoughts of God at once arise. This being so, the whole intention of the metaphors being to express religious facts, and not scientific facts, the popular conception as to the heavenly ocean, in spite of its unscientific character, is as apt and as unobjectionable a metaphor for the Psalmist to use as any other.<sup>1</sup>

The Verses that follow in the Psalm merely expand and enforce the same theme by means of a detailed description of the creation. This is gone over very much in the same order as in Genesis i. First the separation of land and water (Verses 6-9); creation of birds and beasts of the field (Verses 10-12); the rain coming down from the state-rooms

<sup>1</sup> In the same way Job (Chapter iii. 8) uses a phrase borrowed from popular mythology, when he says, "Let those who ban days ban it, who are of skill to rouse the Dragon" (some mythical monster of the sky. See Cox, *in loco*). He does not thereby give any sanction to the belief in the existence of such a monster.

of God (Verse 13); and as the result, grass growing and food for man and beast (Verses 14-16), etc., etc. All this is ascribed to Jehovah's agency; his hand appears in all these phenomena alike. That is to say, in every part of nature, in all that passes before the eye of man, the Hebrew saint could see Jehovah. His spirit was stirred by seeing it all, and religious feelings and the emotions of communion with God were aroused.

Psalm cxxxix. is not strictly a "Nature Psalm," but it may be taken here as it falls naturally in with the above. Its theme is the omniscience and omnipresence of God. These two divine attributes are expressed under various metaphors. "*Whither can I go from thy Spirit? and whither can I flee from thy Presence? If I should climb to heaven, there art thou: if I should make my bed in Sheol, lo, thou art there. If I should take the wings of morning [personification] and dwell in the uttermost west, even there would thy hand lead me, and thy right hand hold me,*" etc., etc. Above or below, in the extreme east or in the extreme west, God would be equally near to him. Now the Writer is evidently giving us a meditation of his own, half prayer, half poem. He is not giving us, with a "Thus saith the Lord," the formulated result of a past revelation made to him in the form of a doctrine of God's omniscience and omnipresence. The revelation is going on as he writes: he does not need to go further than his own present consciousness to find out the doctrine he is enunciating, and hence he quotes no other authority; the immediate certainty of his own experience is enough. Whence, then, is he getting his knowledge? Is it not simply that his spirit, presently in communion with God, tells him that such communion is independent of time and place, that he can see God as now he sees Him anywhere and everywhere, nay, that he cannot run away from the experience, that he cannot find any place

where God would not be as near as He is now?<sup>1</sup> His present experience shews this, and the spirit's experience is the only proper evidence as to where God is, and where He is not, because God's being in a place means that religious men may have communion with Him there. When therefore the Hebrews spoke of God as "dwelling on Horeb" (see above), or as "dwelling in Zion" (Pss. cxxxii. 13, 14; lxxxvii. 2, etc.), and also spoke of Him as everywhere present, there is only a formal contradiction between the phrases, not a real one. The one thought completes the other, and for a full statement of doctrine both are needed. The real meaning is that, although on Horeb or in the Temple service at Jerusalem, the devout spirit is wont to experience communion with God more readily than elsewhere, yet it is also true that the devout spirit can have communion with God anywhere, indeed that the presence of God is sometimes so overpowering that the spirit feels certain it could not escape from the thought by any change of place. The omnipresence of God, therefore, is no material omnipresence; any such thing as "God's filling all space" is of course a contradiction in terms. God's presence or absence are religious, not spatial, ideas, and mean the presence or absence of the possibility of religious communion.<sup>2</sup>

This completes the indications afforded by the "Nature Psalms" of the way in which God was apprehended in natural phenomena. We see that what was beautiful suggested God to the mind of the Psalmists, threw them into states of religious emotion. No special physical characteristic of the things in which they apprehended God's presence can be found. The phenomena noted are simply

<sup>1</sup> See Lipsius: "*Evangelisch-protestantische Dogmatik*," §§ 302-306.

<sup>2</sup> See Calvin's Commentary on Verse 7. He also rejects the idea of a material or spatial omnipresence. "They misapply the passage who adduce it as a proof of the immensity of God's essence," etc. Eng. Tr., vol. v. p. 211.



those that touch the soul with deep emotion ; no other characteristic is common to them all ; they are not susceptible of any other definition. We find, therefore, throughout all these instances, this result at least, that the apprehension of God is not a thing which comes under the cognisance of material science, and therefore it can neither be proved nor disproved by the aid of science. It is altogether a spiritual fact, an inward perception of the spirit. The physical or scientific interpretation of natural phenomena is quite independent of their religious interpretation ; they are of different spheres, and their propositions therefore can never come into collision. The astronomer who "has swept the heavens with his telescope and found no God" has not disproved God's existence, has not even disproved that "the heavens are telling the glory of God," any more than a man who has looked through a microscope at empty space and found no atmosphere, has disproved the existence of the air we breathe. It is not by the microscope that you can detect the presence of the air ; and it is not by the telescope, nor by the eye at all, however aided, that God is discerned. Why should not the spirit have the same right to be trusted, when its assertions are properly examined and understood, as any bodily sense ? Especially when, as we have seen, all that it means to assert is simply the undeniable fact that it *has* these perceptions of God ? The asseverations of science, that she can find no room for God in her sphere, only prove that there must be another sphere independent of her ; that there is a religious interpretation of phenomena independent of their scientific interpretation.

P. THOMSON.

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*THE PLACE AND FUNCTION OF THE LAMP.*

ST. MARK iv. 21, 22; ST. LUKE viii. 16;

ST. MATTHEW v. 15, 16.

THERE can be no doubt that our Lord, like most great teachers, had a knot, or cluster, of favourite sayings—maxims, or even axioms, we may call them—which were so congenial to his mind, so expressive of his most characteristic thoughts, that He habitually repeated them in connections which threw new light upon them, and thus impressed them very deeply on the minds of his disciples. For even in the four brief memoirs which we possess of Him, in which every line was precious, we meet with them again and again; and we may be sure that neither would the Evangelists have recorded, nor would the Spirit who inspired them have moved them to record, these sayings of his so often had they not been of the very first importance. “If all the things which Jesus said and did were written every one,” says St. John, “I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.” The Gospels that were written, or at least those which have been handed down to us, can contain therefore only the merest sample of what He said and did; and if in a selection so small we find the same maxims recorded three or four times over, we may fairly conclude them to be of paramount importance and value.

These favourite sayings—most of which take the form of proverbs, parables, or paradoxes—are such as these: “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear”; “With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again”; “The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord”; “Fear not them that are able to kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do, but fear Him who is able to

kill both body and soul"; "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away"; and the charming parable, "*Doth the lamp come to be put under the bushel or under the couch, and not to be set on the lampstand?*" with the great generalization on which it is based, "*For there is nothing hid save that it may be manifested, neither was anything kept secret save that it might come abroad.*"

To one or two of these maxims attention has already been called in these pages;<sup>1</sup> to others of them I hope to call attention before long: but for the present let us confine our attention to the two last cited, which *are* two, since at times they are used separately, and yet one, since at other times they are blended together.

I have just affirmed that most of these sayings take the form of proverbs, or parables, or paradoxes. An illustration of that assertion lies close at hand. For St. Mark gives us first the parable, "*Doth the lamp come to be put under the bushel or under the couch, and not to be set on the lampstand?*" then the paradox: "*For there is nothing hid save that it may be manifested, neither was anything kept secret save that it might come abroad*"; and then the proverb: "*If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.*" Now this proverb conveys in a brief and telling form the general truth that *Capacity involves Responsibility*. A man who *can* hear *ought* to hear. And if a man who *can* hear *ought* to hear, so also whatever we *can* do for God and our fellows we *ought* to do. Our gifts indicate our service, and bind us to it. But this proverb, although it carries so great a meaning of its own, was commonly used by our Lord, like the hand figured in the margin of some old folios, to call special attention to sentences still greater than itself, and on which He desired to lay the gravest emphasis. Wherever we meet it we may be sure that there immediately precedes it some

<sup>1</sup> See THE EXPOSITOR, *First Series*, vol. ii. p. 472; vol. xi. p. 178.

large, noble, and precious thought which it will be our wisdom to make our own.

So, no doubt, it is used here. And surely it was never used to better purpose. For, as we shall see, the paradox which precedes it conveys nothing less than the very charter of science; while the parable which precedes the paradox is one of the most picturesque and instructive that ever fell even from the lips of Him who spake as none other ever spake. Let us look at each of these in turn.

### I. THE PARABLE.

Of all the parables uttered by our Lord few convey their meaning more instantly and forcibly than this simple and pretty saying on the place and function of the Lamp. It is itself a lamp to us, so transparent is its form, so clearly and brightly does the light shine through it. Both the paradox and the proverb which follow it refuse to yield up the secret with which they are fraught until we search for it carefully and with toil; but *this* saying is one that cannot be hidden from us; it shines in its own light; and the moment we glance at it we understand that Christ is inviting us to *teach* what we have learned, to *give* to our neighbours the truth we have received from Him.

Clear and obvious as the main intention of the Parable is, there is nevertheless much in it, much which either contributes to its beauty or swells the volume of its meaning, at which we can only arrive by diligent thought and research. We must recover and study its original form, we must replace it in its original relations, and ask ourselves what it conveyed to those who first heard it, if we would really and fully possess ourselves of it.

We see at a glance, indeed, that the Parable throws some light on the social customs of the age and land in which it was spoken. It reminds us, for instance, that in Palestine,

as indeed in ancient Greece and Rome, when the darkness fell, little lamps, containing oil and a wick, were brought into the rooms of all classes of the people and placed on slender stands, commonly some two or three feet high, to give light to all who were in the house. But, until we look into it more closely, we do not see that we may gather from the Parable itself what sort or class of house our Lord had in his eye, and in what period of Jewish history this picturesque saying must of necessity have been uttered. And yet so soon as we recover the original form of the sentence it is clear both that the Lord Jesus had an actual scene before his mind's eye as He spoke; and that this scene was drawn, not from some large and wealthy mansion, but from one of the huts in which poor men made their home. For though our Authorized Version speaks only of *a candle, a bushel, a bed, a candlestick*, the Greek lays emphasis on *the lamp, the bushel, the couch, the lampstand*; and this use of the definite article implies that in the household to which our Lord refers there was only *one* lamp, only one measure, only one couch, only one lampstand. It must have been, therefore, a poor man's house the picture of which rose before his mind, and not a large and richly furnished mansion of the opulent or the great.

So again, the words for "bushel" and for "bed" or "couch" indicate that it was while, or after, Judea was under the administration of imperial Rome that our Lord uttered this parable. For the word for "bushel" shews that it was the Roman *modius*, a measure which held more nearly a peck than a bushel, which was to be found in every Jewish house; and this measure could only have come into general use after the Jews had been conquered by the Roman arms. Probably it was more uniform and accurate than most of the Oriental measures, and so won its way into common use. Possibly the Jews were compelled to adopt it in their dealings with the Romans, and so



gradually fell into the way of using it in all their dealings. And this *modius*, or measure, implies our Parable, was to be found in every Jewish household. It was kept in the family apartment, where the lamp was lit ; and here, no doubt, in the Oriental dearth of furniture, it was often turned upside down and used as a seat, or a table, as well as a standard measure. Under such a measure, therefore, a lighted lamp might very well be hid.

So too the word for "bed," or "couch," is not that which denotes the Oriental mat, or *mat-tress*, on which the Jews stretched themselves for repose, and under which of course no burning lamp could possibly have been concealed, but the Roman *triclinium*, the divan, or raised couch, on which guests reclined round three sides of a table while they took their meals. This Western convenience early found its way into the East, and was generally adopted by the time of our Lord. And as this couch, or divan, was a bench covered with cushions, and boarded down to the floor, a lamp might easily be slipped under it at either end, and be hidden from those who came into the house.

Obviously, then, the Parable might well have been spoken at the very date to which it is commonly attributed. It could not have been spoken before the Romans had conquered the Jews, and forced or induced them to adopt many Latin customs or words. It could very hardly have been spoken after Jerusalem had been destroyed by Titus. Its natural place is that comparatively brief period in which Judea was a Roman province. So that here we have one of those minute and undesigned coincidences, all the more reliable because undesigned and minute, which go far to prove that our Gospels were really written at or about the date to which they have always been assigned.

In the very wording of this sentence, then, we may find, we have found, an indication of social customs and evidence of its historical date ; we have seen what sort of house our

Lord had in his eye, what sort of lamp and lampstand, what sort of measure, and what sort of couch. And now we may gather from it that there *was* a picture before his mind: for as we linger over his words the very impression made on his mind by that picture is reproduced in ours. "Is a candle brought?" should be "Doth a lamp come?" for so it stands in the Greek. "Doth a lamp *come*?" there is something a little ghostly in the words; they seem to imply that the lamp comes *of its own accord*, without being sent for, without being brought. The original verb implies motion, but nothing more; it says nothing of the origin of the motion, or of the person originating it. And, no doubt, this ghostly impression, as of a self-moving lamp, is made upon us because our Lord, as He spoke, was mentally looking at the scene which He described. For when we are sitting in a dark room, and a bright lamp is brought into it, we do not at first see the person who brings it, cannot at first make out who it is; the bright glare of the lamp throws its bearer into shade, and our eyes are too dazzled by the sudden brightness to penetrate that shade. The lamp seems to come, to approach us, of its own accord. The very form of the Parable, therefore, shews that by an effort of imagination our Lord put Himself into the very house, into the very room, of which He spoke, saw the lamp come into it but could not see who carried it; but marked that it made its way to the lampstand, and did not hide itself under the measure or the divan. How much, then, there is both of historical suggestion and of graphic dramatic force in the simple words: *Doth the lamp come to be put under the modius or under the triclinium, and not to be set on the lampstand?*

So much for the *form* of the parable. And as for its *theme*, that is clear and obvious beyond mistake. Our Lord uttered this parable to teach us that no man is illuminated for his own sake, just as no lamp is lit for its own sake.

Just as the lamp is lit that it may shine, so we are taught that we may teach. No truth is a private possession, just as no truth is of any private interpretation.

Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,  
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues  
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike  
As if we had them not.

No truth is, or can be, dangerous. All that we *can* learn, we *may* learn. All that we *have* learned, we are bound to teach; all that we have received, we are bound to give. To conceal from others any truth which we ourselves have been taught of God is to hide the lamp that has come to us under a bushel or under a couch, instead of setting it on a lampstand. It is to frustrate the very purpose for which it was sent. It is to run counter to the will and intention of God; for, in his intention, "nothing is covered except that it may be uncovered, nothing kept secret except that it may be published abroad."

This is the main theme of the Parable of the Lamp; but if we would see how it is treated, and how many other lessons it is capable of teaching us, we must trace its use through the other Gospels.

In St. Luke viii. 16 we have another report of it: "*No man, when he hath lighted a lamp, covereth it with a vessel or putteth it under a couch, but setteth it on a lampstand, that they who enter in may see the light.*" Here there is comparatively little to detain us. The Parable stands in the same connection of thought as in St. Mark, carries the same great moral with it, and is different only in that it is given in a slightly expanded form. This expansion of form is marked, however, by two characteristic variations. Whereas St. Mark, who wrote mainly for the Romans, speaks of a Roman measure, the *modius*, St. Luke, who wrote for the whole Gentile world, speaks simply of a "vessel," any vessel or measure used throughout the habit-

able globe. And whereas St. Matthew, writing mainly for Jews, speaks, as we shall see in a moment, of the lamp as kindled that it may give light "unto all that are *in* the house," St. Luke speaks of it as kindled in order "that they who *enter* into the house" may see the light. For St. Matthew was himself a Jew, and wrote for those who, like himself, were already *in* the household of God; but St. Luke was a Gentile, and wrote for those who, like himself, had a great desire to *enter* into God's house and find themselves at home in it. He and they had, so to speak, long stood outside the Father's house, seeing and desiring the light that shone through its windows; but now Christ had called them into the house, had bidden them enter, had assured them that the house was built and the lamp lit *for them* as well as for the Jews, for all who would *come into it* as well as for all who were already in it.

Beyond these striking and characteristic details there is nothing, I think, to detain us in St. Luke's version of our Parable. But if we turn to St. Matthew's version of it—Chapter v. Verse 15—we see at once that he adds a new thought to it, a new lesson of grave, practical moment. For, after reporting our Lord as saying: "*Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the lamp-stand, and it giveth light to all that are in the house,*" St. Matthew makes Him add: "*Even so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works,*" your good deeds, "*and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*" And in these words, words in which our Lord Himself draws out the moral of his parable, that parable is brought home and applied to every man's conscience in the sight of God. We are taught *how* we are to teach the truths we have learned, *how*, above all, we are to let our light shine before men; we are warned that this duty devolves on us *all*, that it cannot and must not be evaded even by those of us who know the least and are the most slenderly endowed.

When we hear that every man who has been taught by Christ is bound to teach what, and all, that he has learned, some of us feel, at least we plead, that that duty cannot be imposed on *us* because we know so little, or because we have no gift, no capacity, for teaching even the little we know. If others were to frame and publish the same low estimate of our powers, we might be hurt or affronted; but men can be very humble when they wish to escape an unwelcome duty, and even those who think in their hearts that they are as well off as most of their neighbours are, nevertheless, apt to plead, when urged to undertake some work for the Church, that they know very little, and really have no faculty for the work, or the teaching, to which they are invited. And there are others who are genuinely humble, who habitually and sincerely underrate their knowledge and capacity, and who dare not undertake a work which seems too high for them. Willing to learn, they are unfit, or afraid, to teach.

Now a good deal of the humility which prompts men to decline any public service, any ministry, in the kingdom of Christ is, as I have hinted, only the self-conceit which apes humility, and springs rather from indolence and self-indulgence than from any deep sense of inability or unfitness. And even where it is genuine and sincere, it is very often a mistake. Those who know but little of the truth can often teach that little more effectively and sympathetically than those who know much, and who have forgotten the difficulty with which they themselves mastered its first rudiments. And men may teach very effectually without once entering a pulpit or a classroom, nay, without so much as once opening their lips. How many opportunities, for instance, we all have of bearing witness to the truth, of making a stand for the Christian faith, as we meet our neighbours in the market place or in public and private gatherings! When we meet men who make light of



religion, or who jest at virtue, or who speak with relish and approval of the smartness which borders on dishonesty or of the selfishness which implies injustice or unkindness to others, might we not even find words, or, if words are beyond us, at least find looks, gestures, actions, in which to shew that we hold it to be our chief good and pleasure, as well as our chief duty, to serve God and to love our neighbour as ourselves? When we attend public meetings, even if we do not speak, may we not, by our approval of all that is just, generous, noble in what we hear, and by our disapproval of all that is base, selfish, frivolous, bear an emphatic testimony to the truths, and to our faith in the truths, we have learned from Christ? Would that for once I could say, with the emphasis it deserves, that *hearing itself is a kind of speaking*! It deeply needs to be said, though there should be no need to say it. For is it not obvious that by our very selection of our place of worship, by merely attaching ourselves to one church rather than to another, we proclaim what those forms of Christian truth are which we value, and what the spirit we approve in those who are called to preach those truths? Is it not clear that by a regular and punctual attendance on any public ministry we are setting our seal to it? that by the interest and sympathy with which we listen to words spoken from the pulpit we give them weight? What harm, what infinite harm, has been wrought by men who continued to attend a ministry long after they had discovered that it did not meet their spiritual wants or breathe a spirit they could admire! What harm, what infinite harm, has been wrought by the listless, inattentive, unconcerned air with which those who believed listened to the very truths they believed! Oh, that good men would but understand that by their attendance on any public teaching they are saying with a power beyond that of words: "*These* are the truths which I believe, and *this* is the spirit in which, as I

conceive, they ought to be urged." If they did but understand, and act on the understanding, that by their eagerness to go to the church of their choice, by their keen attention, by their evident sympathy, by their hearty enjoyment both of the teaching and the worship, they were inviting their neighbours to attend, to listen, to receive the truth and to share in their devotion; if they did but feel, on the other hand, that by suffering themselves to be detained from worship by trifles which would not keep them from business, by their indifferent and perfunctory participation in acts of devotion, by every moment of inattention and flagging sympathy, they are virtually saying to their neighbours, "We don't think *you* would gain much by coming with us, or by being much in earnest if you came," I verily believe that all our churches would soon be full, and every surviving pulpit a power: for this would be so to let our light shine before men that they could not but glorify our Father who is in heaven. It is the Congregation that preaches quite as much as the Minister, though often, alas, they seem to be preaching in very opposite strains. Would that our congregations did but know their power and their duty!

In these indirect ways, then, every man may teach the truths he knows, even though he should fill no public place, nor so much as open his lips. But what we have specially to mark is that St. Matthew points out still another way in which all who have received light from Heaven may let that light shine before men. Let men see your light, he says, in your "good works," in your good *deeds*. Now this is a mode of shining from which no man can excuse himself on the modest plea that he knows but little, and has no gift or faculty for teaching even the little he knows. If a good deed shines like a candle in a dark and naughty world, who may not give his neighbours some little light? To what good man is a good deed impossible? Nay, what

good man can so much as think that no good deed is possible to him?

We all know what stress our Lord lays on good works, how He teaches that no knowledge of Christian doctrine, no splendid achievements wrought in his name, no homage rendered to his person, will bring us into his kingdom. We know how He makes our very knowledge dependent on our obedience, assuring us that we can only come to know his doctrine as we keep his commandments. And yet how constantly is the plain meaning of his words evaded, both in theory and in practice. In theory, men have substituted "faith" for obedience, and have held that to believe certain dogmas was a surer way of salvation than to love and serve God and man. In practice, some substitute worship for obedience, *getting* light for *giving* light; while others substitute good resolutions for good works, or assume that sorrow for having done amiss is equivalent to an endeavour to do well.

How many a man, for example, thinks, or acts as if he thought, that the chief end of religion is going to church; that if he is regular and attentive in his place of worship, and learns all he can of God's will, God will not expect much more of him than that: quite forgetting that he goes to church on Sundays to learn the Will which he is to *do* all the week; to get the lamp lit, or replenished, or at the lowest trimmed, which is to shine through the good deeds of his daily life. His excuse is his condemnation. If a clerk in a public office, or a workman in a factory, were to go to work late day after day, and were to plead in palliation that he made a point of reading the official rules every week, and above all the rule which forbade him to come late, *he* would be in the very position of the man who pleads that he reads his Bible and attends public worship as an excuse for any neglect or violation of God's commandments in the daily round of life. So far from being any better, we are the

worse for merely knowing God's will, if we do not *do* it. The light that is in us is our condemnation and our shame if it does not shine out through the good deeds of a life at one with the will of God.

How many, again, think, or act as if they thought, that speaking eloquently about the light, or a quick sensibility to its beauty, were a fair and acceptable equivalent for letting their light shine before men. They are easily moved to admire goodness; they grow eloquent in its praise; they say fine things about it, and say these fine things with so much emotion, or they listen to what others say in its praise, and feel so much the better and happier for what they hear, that, without further ado, they take it for granted that they are good and have discharged their main duty as religious men. To all who thus deceive themselves with mere words, all who are hearers or speakers, but not doers, our Parable says, "Let your light *shine*, shine in and through your good works. It is not enough to praise the light; you must walk in it, if you would prove that you are children of the light and the day."

Others are for ever repenting of the wrongs or sins into which they have fallen, but their repentance does not stop them from doing wrong again; or they are deeply touched as they hear of the wrongs or miseries of their neighbours, but they take no thought or pains to redress the wrongs or to relieve the miseries they bemoan. They are very sorry that God's will is not done on earth as it is done in heaven; but they forget that doing God's will is one thing, and being sorry that it is not done is another; or, for all their sorrow, they will undertake no troublesome duty, practise no great self-denial, attempt no unwelcome or difficult task, in order to get a little more of God's will done in this unregarded corner of the earth or that.

And still others are for ever framing good resolutions and purposing amendment, and too often assume that their good

intentions will count for good works. Like the son in the parable, they say, "I go, sir," and yet go not. "I will do better," they say; and yet they do no better, but fall back into their old course of careless negligence. And so the lamp, which has been lit in order that it might give light, is hidden under a bushel of good intentions, or under the couch on which they weep over their past offences, and the world is none the brighter for them, none the better.

Let us understand that we must *do* the will of God, not *intend* to do it merely, nor merely regret that we have not done it, nor be content either with feeling beautifully about it or speaking eloquently in its praise. That high Will has to be *done*, done in the good deeds of a good daily life, before men can really see what it is and how fair it is, and glorify our Father who is in heaven by an obedience like our own.

And let us remember that the lamp that would shine must *burn*; that to do good we must deny and sacrifice ourselves, sacrificing at least all that is evil, and denying ourselves in much that might be very good and pleasant for us did it not impede us in our service of God and man.

S. Cox.

## THE HISTORICAL CHRIST OF ST. PAUL.

### 1. THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS (*Continued*).

ROMANS vi. 23.—"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." There are two distinct conceptions in this Verse; one of them is decidedly Jewish, the other as decidedly not Jewish. The Jewish conception is the connection between sin and destruction, "the wages of sin is death"; it bears so manifestly the stamp of the Old Testament that no one can have



the slightest difficulty in referring its origin in the mind of St. Paul to that part of his culture which was Judaic. The conception which is not Jewish, and which never could have come from Judea, is contained in the last clause of the Verse: "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ." Let us consider what it implies—that the actual life of the Eternal, the essential being which dwells in the immortal Jehovah, is communicated to mortals through a son of man. An idea more distinctly anti-Jewish it would be impossible to conceive. The characteristic of the God of Judaism was the fact that He was incommunicable. He was self-existent, self-contained, absolutely self-sufficient. He dwelt in a region apart. His deepest nature had never been revealed to mortal eye; no man could see Him and live. The essential feature of his relation to humanity was the vastness of his distance from it. He could only speak to man through the medium of imperative command; and his communications required to be conveyed through the agency of intermediate intelligences. Such a view of God left no room for a conception which implied the communication of the Divine to the human. It would have repudiated the Pauline idea that God could present a gift of Himself, could make his own creatures the sharers in his essential life. Such a thought was the very antithesis of Judaism; yet it is the leading thought of the passage before us. Whence did Paul derive it? He was born and bred a Jew, and was up to the age of manhood impregnated with the genius of the national religion. All the original elements of his nature must have led him in an opposite direction from the thought he has expressed in this passage. There must, therefore, have entered into his mind some element different from those which made up his original constitution. The change in his inward experience must be referred to some collision of his old nature with the surroundings of a new historical atmosphere.

When we turn to the fourth Gospel we find ourselves in the presence of an atmosphere which would amply account for the Pauline consciousness. We find this Gospel dominated and pervaded by the idea that the Divine Life has imparted itself to the world; that the Son of God, in the form of the Son of Man, has communicated to the hearts of men the very essence of his own eternal being. The impartation is expressed in the boldest figures: He gives his flesh for the world; his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. Of course we do not here assume that the narrative of the fourth Gospel is true, nor yet that it is the work of an Apostle: we simply take for granted that such a narrative is now in our hands; and, being in our hands, we ask how it is related to the passage before us. The answer to this question at least is irresistible. It is manifest that the conception of the fourth Gospel, if admitted to be historical, would explain the conception of Paul; it would reveal the existence of an atmosphere which would account for his revolt from the distant God of Judaism. This fact is very remarkable, and is well worth considering; it bears powerfully upon a point of modern criticism. It is a favourite doctrine of the Negative School that the fourth Gospel is the fruit of a later atmosphere than that of the first Christian age. We are told that there is a sharp contrast between the Christ of the apostolic period and the Christ of the closing century; the one is a practical Teacher, the other is a dreamy Mystic. The Christ of the first age, we are told, is essentially a Jew, recognizing the incommunicable unity of God, and conscious Himself of being the servant of God; the Christ of the fourth Gospel is a manifestation of the life of God, who, by revealing Himself in the soul of man, bridges for ever the chasm between them. We are told that this later Christ is the product of an Alexandrian influence, the mythical embodiment of a time when the internal was beginning to supplant the

external, and when the doctrines of Neo-Platonism were taking the place of the outward conceptions of Judaism. While the Temple stood, and the worship of the Temple was paramount, men had been content to reverence a Christ of history; when the Temple had passed away, and the externalizing tendencies of Jewish worship had been superseded, they were impelled to seek for a Christ who should be deeper and nearer than the historical Personage, a Christ who should not simply be seen and heard, but realized in the thought and felt in the heart.

Now no Christian apologist has ever denied that Christianity has an outward and an inward aspect; nor has he ever doubted the fact that, in the order of nature, the outward precedes the inward; Paul himself affirms that that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural. What the Christian apologist contends is that the spiritual conception of Christ is not an afterthought in the sense of being a human creation; he contends that the spiritual, like the natural, conception had its root in the first Christian atmosphere, and its origin in the life of the Founder. He will not accept the view that it is the product of an Alexandrian school. He refuses to accept that view, not from any dogmatic bias received from theological training, but simply and entirely on the ground of historical fact. He finds within the boards of the New Testament itself, and in a portion of the New Testament about which there can be no doubt at all, conclusive evidence that the idea here called Alexandrian had its home in the first Christian age and on the first Christian soil. Had the Apostolic origin of the fourth Gospel been conceded, its comparatively late date would not have prevented it from being regarded as the testimony of primitive Christianity; it would be felt to contain the sayings of one who had heard the words of the Master. But here is a testimony about whose Apostolic origin there cannot be a shadow of suspicion, a testimony

which is a generation earlier than John even on the orthodox supposition, and which beyond all question radiated from the dawn of the Christian Church. And when we examine it, what do we find? Simply this, that the conception of the fourth Gospel is concentrated and focused in a sentence: "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." The Gospel of John simply exhibits this thought in endless variations—in the bread from heaven, and the water of life, and the flesh given for the food of the world. The conception is made more vivid, but nothing is added to its substance. The thought which is dominant in John is clearly prefigured in Paul; the thought that the Divine Life has, through a human life, been communicated to the life of humanity. It is vain, therefore, to say that the Christ of the fourth Gospel is an after-thought; in germ He is all here, in the very foreground of the historical scene. There are undoubtedly in our authorized Christian narratives two clearly marked stages of development, the earlier exhibiting the outward, and the later the inward, work of the Master. But the Epistles of St. Paul clearly prove that the earlier and the later stage alike belong to one historical atmosphere; that they are both exhibited in the original conception of the Christian Founder; and that the advent of the later development is already prefigured in the earlier. If we find in these Pauline Epistles an echo of those plain and practical precepts which mark the teaching of a primitive age, we are confronted not less powerfully by those germs of philosophic thought which constitute the preparation for an age which is to come; the Christ of the Synoptists and the Christ of St. John would seem to blend consistently in the heart and in the creed of the Gentile Apostle.

*Romans vii. 4.*—"That ye should be married to another; even to Him who is raised from the dead." Here we have



a passage which, to a considerable extent, runs upon the lines of the foregoing Scripture; but it is expressed in a far bolder figure. So bold indeed is the metaphor, that it is only the familiarity of eighteen hundred years which prevents us from being startled by it; the first Christian century must have felt it in all its force. St. Paul speaks of the human soul as *married* to the Divine Life. Marriage is the nearest possible form of union known amongst men. There are forms of union which do not imply an equality of rank. The relation of the head to the members is a union; but it does not destroy the notion of the head's sovereignty. The relation of the soul to the body is a union; but the soul remains supreme. The relation of the parent to the child is a union; but the parent is king over the child. The marriage relation, on the other hand, whatever it may be in point of practice or even of civil law, is, in point of theory, a bond of oneness; its root idea is the reduction to unity of lives that before ran separately. The marriage of the soul with the Divine Life is, therefore, the boldest of all figures; it is a much more startling expression of union than anything in the fourth Gospel. It is more than the sheep and the Shepherd, more than the branches and the Vine, more than the participation in the flesh and blood of the Son of Man; it is the idea of an essential identity of life, of a complete community of interest, and of an entire sharing of each in the possessions of the other. It becomes more and more impossible that St. Paul could have uttered these words if the atmosphere called Johannine were not already around him, if the conception of the fourth Gospel had not been involved in the earliest vision of Christianity. Nor does it seem to us a likely supposition that he would have ventured on a metaphor so bold, if there had not been ringing in his ears an echo from the words of the Master, which seemed to warrant it. If he knew as an historical fact that the Master had called Himself "the



Bridegroom," or if he was familiar with such parabolic references to the marriage feast as we meet with in the Synoptic Gospels, we can well understand his language; if he was the inventor of that language he must have transcended in a remarkable degree all traces of his Judaic birth and education.<sup>1</sup> The whole passage sounds like Johannine thought expressed in Synoptic symbolism. It singularly unites the elements of two generations. It breathes the atmosphere of profound mysticism, and as such it anticipates the spirit of the fourth Evangelist; it employs the metaphor of familiar daily life, and as such it re-echoes the spirit of an earlier day. On the very lowest computation, it may with confidence be affirmed that, if there were an historical Christ who united in his own person the characteristics of the first three Gospels with the spirit of the fourth, the natural outcome of such a union would be the passage before us.

*Romans* viii. 3, 4.—Here, for the first time in this Epistle, we get a glimpse into a very important subject—the relation which, in the opinion of the earliest Christian age, the Founder of Christianity bore to the essential faith of Judaism: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God [did], sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemning sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." We wish, from the apologetic point of view, to attempt an analysis of this very important passage. We shall try to come to it with no foregone conclusion, but, in the first instance, to forget that we have already in our minds a discourse called the Sermon on the Mount, which professes to reveal Christ's relation to the law of

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah liv., Jeremiah iii. etc., are spoken of the ideal collective nation, not of individual men in history.

Judaism. We shall assume, meantime, that this is our first introduction to the Founder of Christianity in his attitude towards the old religion; and shall merely recapitulate the statement that, by the admission of the adversaries of the Faith, it is an introduction given by a document undoubtedly genuine and unquestionably belonging to the first Christian age.

What, then, according to this document, was Christ's relation to the Jewish law? First, and foremost, we have to observe the broad fact that, in the view of St. Paul, the aim of the Christian Founder was identical with the aim of the Law; it was in each case the condemnation of sin. St. Paul declares that Christ and Moses were allies, fellow-workers, towards the same great end. And this is all the more remarkable from the fact that it was Paul's interest to maintain the contrary, or, at least, to say nothing about it. There was a strong party in the Christian Church which desired to make Christianity merely the flower of Judaism; and the proclivities of the Gentile Apostle might well have led him either to underrate or to ignore the similarity of purpose proclaimed by the two systems. The fact that he did neither is a strong proof that such a similarity of purpose *was* proclaimed; and that the evidence for it was to his mind historically irresistible. With his habitual candour, therefore, he accepts the position. He maintains that the historical design of Him whom he calls the Son of God was to fulfil the righteousness of the law; that He came not to destroy the legal institutions of the past, but to carry on that very work which it was the special aim of these institutions to begin, continue, and finish.

But St. Paul goes further. He declares that the Christ of history could only fulfil the law by transcending it. He came to do that which the Mosaic institutions had all along designed to do; yet He came to do that which the Mosaic institutions had found themselves unable to accomplish.

The Jewish law, Paul says, had a Christian purpose; but it could not carry out its purpose: it was too weak to execute its own mission. The Founder of Christianity came to impart to the law a new force; and, in this light, He was apparently an innovator upon the things which had been said to them of old time.

Let us look yet more deeply into the passage, and we shall see yet more deeply into St. Paul's estimate of the relation which the Christ of history bore to the law of Judaism. That law, he says, was too weak to execute its own mission. Wherein, in his view, consisted its weakness? He goes on to tell us; he says it was "*weak through the flesh*"; that is to say, weak by reason of its outwardness or carnality. As interpreted to the men of old time it meant no more than the command to refrain from certain acts of evil, and to perform certain acts of goodness; it did not contemplate good and evil as principles of life which stretched in a moment over the acts of the whole man. The Jewish law had been viewed merely as a civil law; it was a police force to prevent crime rather than a moral force to ensure purity; and, therefore, all its prohibitions were interpreted in a local and temporary sense. The Founder of Christianity brought a new strength into the law by substituting an inner for an outward force, by replacing the walking after the flesh by the walking after the spirit. There was no difference in the attitude of walking; the difference lay in the object which impelled the movement. The precepts of the Law were to be the precepts of the Gospel; the distinction between the Law and the Gospel was to be the motive force which dictated their observance: those who had kept the Law had walked after the flesh; those who obeyed the Gospel were to follow the impulse of the spirit.

Now in this analysis we deny that we have made any use of the document called the Sermon on the Mount.

We have read nothing into the passage, have exhibited nothing but what is directly and immediately involved in its teaching. Having done so, however, we are now at liberty to turn to this Sermon on the Mount. We are not, in the meantime, seeking for a similarity of portraiture; we can have no portraiture of a Christ until the facts have been all gathered. But when, in a document undoubtedly primitive, we find a fact stated in the same form as it appears in a document alleged to be later, we are entitled to conclude that the writer of the later MS. did not himself invent it, in other words, that it was not a myth of his own imagination. We have then a document alleged by Christians to be an authentic discourse delivered by the Founder of their religion, declared by negative criticism to be a fabrication of the second century. In this discourse there are put into the mouth of the Christian Founder these words: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." The critics of the school of Tübingen make these words the product of the second century, and propose to explain their origin by the exigencies of the time. They tell us, and quite truly, that the Christendom of that period was divided between two tendencies, one seeking a Judaic and the other a Gentile atmosphere. The individual peculiarities of the Apostles had become the germs of distinct schools of thought, and each school tried to express itself in a Gospel of its own. The Judaic tendency expressed itself in a Gospel attributed to Matthew; the Gentile tendency in a Gospel attributed to Luke. The Gospel attributed to Matthew studied to represent its Christ in a Jewish attitude. It held Him up before the eye of Christendom as one who, amidst all his seeming innovations, had never really departed from the old conservative principle. Accordingly, in his Sermon on the Mount, it caused Him to speak as a Jew, put into his mouth the



words which betokened an unbroken harmony with the institutions of his ancestors: "Think not I came to destroy the law; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." When the school of Tübingen turns to Luke xvi. and xvii., it finds more difficulty. It attributes the Gospel of Luke to a Gentile Christian; and yet it finds that Gospel saying, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fail." But the school of Tübingen is not daunted. The Gospel of Luke is the work of a Gentile indeed; but it is the work of a Gentile of a conciliatory spirit. He admired St. Paul so much that he wanted to make the Christ of St. Paul the Christ of all Christendom; and he thought he would best effect this by putting into the mouth of the Pauline Christ some verbal concessions to Judaism. Accordingly, wherever a strong Gentile sentiment is uttered, it is generally followed by some modifying clause or qualifying consideration. In the immediately preceding Verse the writer had made an assertion very strongly Gentile: "The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of heaven is preached." He is afraid he has gone too far. The Judaic party may be offended by a declaration so uncompromising. Something must be said to modify it. There must be put into the mouth of this Gentile Christ some utterances which may tend to reconcile Him with the sentiments of the Judaic Sermon on the Mount, some words which may help to unite Him with the conception of an earlier day. Therefore, immediately after the declaration has been made that the kingdom of heaven had superseded the reign of the law and the prophets, there is added the significant saying that the spirit of the law still governs the new regime: "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."

Now before the earlier Pauline document this air-built castle of Baur and Zeller vanishes into its native element.



Here is a manuscript unquestionably belonging to the first Christian age, and indubitably the work of an early Christian disciple; and here, in the most unequivocal terms, is asserted Christ's relation to the Jewish law. It is the same relation which appears in our present Gospels. The Founder of Christianity stands before us in the light of a Reformer whose reforms are in the interest of conservatism, who fulfils the spirit of the old institutions by seeming to innovate upon them, and who adds strength to the original fabric by building it up from within. He does what the law could not do; but, all the time, He is executing its destined mission. And this seeming combination of the Innovator and the Conservative is not the effort of some Christian to reconcile Paul with Peter; it is Paul's own conception of the Christ of Christendom. In the very heat of his opposition to Judaism, and with every inward principle impelling him to revolt from the legal dispensation, the Apostle of the Gentiles has proclaimed to the world a Christ who came not to destroy the law but to fulfil. Is not this in itself a powerful presumption that the Christ of Paul is a Christ of history?

*Romans* xii. 4, 5, compared with Verse 14 *seq.* In the intervening Chapters there are references to the historical Christ which might have been adduced; but they move upon the same lines over which we have already travelled, and do not introduce any new matter. Our object in this inquiry is to avoid repetition; and therefore we confine ourselves to those passages which present a fresh phase of the Christian portraiture, or which furnish at least a fresh aspect of its old phases. We pass now to the 12th Chapter of *Romans*, and we begin with that portion of it which extends from the 14th Verse to the end. In reading these verses we are at once impressed with the notion that we have heard something like them before. They

contain a series of practical precepts, bearing an unmistakable resemblance to those in the Sermon on the Mount. The Apostle tells his readers to "bless those that persecute them, to bless and curse not"; and we recall the words of St. Matthew (Chap. v. 44), "Bless them that curse you." He tells them to "provide things honest in the sight of all men"; and we recall the command of St. Matthew (Chap. v. 14), "Let your light shine before men." He tells them to "recompense to no man evil for evil"; and we recall the injunction of St. Matthew (Chap. v. 39), "I say unto you that ye resist not evil." He tells them "to give place unto wrath, to feed their enemy if he hunger, to give him drink if he thirst"; and we recall the precept which the first Evangelist (St. Matt. v. 44) ascribes to the Master: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

Now the question is, whence did St. Paul derive these precepts? or, rather, for we do not here look beyond the mind of the Apostle, whence did he profess to derive them? Is he speaking on his own individual responsibility, or is he uttering the mandates of another? A moment's reflection will make it evident that St. Paul is not uttering these precepts on his own individual responsibility, but as an interpreter of the law of Christian morality; in other words, as a scribe in the New Dispensation. For it is to be distinctly observed that, before adducing any precept at all, he postulates his conviction that there exists an organic union between the souls of those to whom he is speaking and the spirit of the Christian Founder. In Verses 4 and 5 of this same Chapter he declares that the Christian derives all his gifts and graces from the fact that there dwells within him the actual life of the Christ of history: "As we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ"; and he says, in Verse 6, that it is only on the ground of this

union that he requires obedience to the precepts he is about to deliver. He declares that, because the servants of Christ are united to the Master, they ought to have the essential gifts and graces of the Master. We ask particular attention to this principle, as we shall have occasion to make great use of it in the sequel. St. Paul never asks his disciples to do anything of themselves, and never professes to teach them anything on his own responsibility, without expressly stating that he is diffident from having no command on the subject. He speaks to them as the members of a Divine Organism. He addresses them as one who is simply conveying the mandates of a higher life to which his own life has been mysteriously joined; and he expects them to fulfil these mandates only in so far as they have themselves been made recipients of this same communion. Let us make our meaning more clear.

In Romans i. 16, St. Paul declares that he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. He asserts, as a reason for not being ashamed of it, that it contains an element of power fitted to appeal alike to the Greek and to the Jew; and, in the following Verse, he goes on to state that this universal power consists in its Divine morality: "for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." Now the constant problem in the mind of St. Paul is, how the revelation is to be transformed into a possession; or, to use his own words, how a man is to be "*made* the righteousness of God." He acknowledges that this Divine morality is revealed in, and therefore professed by, the Christian Founder; how is it to be made to pass from the Christian Founder to the Christian disciple? There is clearly only one method possible; the life of the Founder must, in some way or other, be so attached to the life of the disciple that the spiritual possessions of the One will become the spiritual possessions of the other; if we are to be made the righteousness of God, it must be "*in Him*." Accord-

ingly, it is the distinct doctrine of Paul that between the Founder of Christianity and his followers there had taken place an actual organic union precisely analogous to that which subsists between the head and the members of a human body. And let us remember that, however mystical may have been the process by which this union was effected, there was in the view of the Apostle nothing mystical in its result. The method of its accomplishment was unknown; but, when accomplished, it was the union not only with an historical Christ, but with the actual Christ of history. When the human soul was united to the person of the Christian Founder, it became heir to all He had done in the flesh; it became partaker of his death, of his rising, of his righteousness. It was filled with the self-same Spirit which had dwelt in the Son of David; all its thoughts were the repetition of his thoughts, all its acts were the echoes of his working. To say that any gift or grace belonged to a Christian disciple was, with Paul, precisely tantamount to saying that such a gift or grace had been manifested in the life of the Founder; for the entire view of St. Paul was built upon the doctrine that the soul, which had been crucified together with Him, had received as its new life the divinely human Spirit which had animated the Christ of history.

Now what is the conclusion from all this in relation to the passage before us? It lies on the very surface. If St. Paul told his converts to follow certain precepts which the world of his day would have called paradoxes, if he told them to provide things honest in the sight of all men, if he bade them give place unto wrath, if he enjoined them to overcome evil with good, to bless their persecutors, to feed their enemy when he hungered and give him drink when he thirsted, he did so because, in his view, these precepts embodied the spirit and teaching of the historical Christ. He never dreamed of regarding himself as the founder of a



school; he was in his own eyes simply a disciple; nay, he did not claim even the independence of a disciple, he was but a member of the Divine body. The morality which he promulgated was not an ethical code woven out of his own imaginings; it was a morality which he believed himself to have derived from a Divine authority; it was the essential life of the Son of Man. And here, for the second time, we must direct attention to that remarkable amalgamation of standpoints which is exhibited in the Christ of St. Paul. Within the compass of twelve Verses we are introduced to two seemingly opposite phases of Christianity,—a Christ of mysticism, and a Christ of practice. The Jesus of Matthew has been called a practical Moralist; the Jesus of John has been termed a mystical Dreamer; and it has again and again been alleged that these two are contrary. With Paul the mysticism and the practice are the two halves of one whole, the spirit and the form which complete the Person of the Founder. We are ushered into the presence of a Christ so closely united to the soul that He is said to be the corporeal Head of humanity; and we feel instinctively that the Christ of St. Paul has all the mysticism of the fourth Evangelist. But, immediately afterwards, we are in the presence of a Christ who speaks the language of St. Matthew, addresses the common needs of men, and meets their moral wants with plain and practical precepts. And, in the view of St. Paul, so far are these from being contrary, that the latter is the result of the former. It is by reason of his union with the members of humanity that the life of the Christian Founder can cease to be a transcendental life, and can descend to the light of common day; it is because He has lifted humanity into the mystical region of the Divine that He is able to manifest Divinity in the practical sphere of the human.

G. MATHESON.

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## *THE WORSHIP OF CHRIST.*

THERE are those who while regarding Christ as the ideal of perfect humanity, the brightest revelation of the moral character of God, while accepting Him as their example and acknowledging his right to their reverence and love, feel it their duty to withhold from Him their worship. This, they say, cannot rightly be rendered to humanity however perfect, but must be reserved exclusively for essential Deity. And they claim to be, in a special and peculiar sense, the worshippers of one God, and maintain that their doctrine is more rational than that of other Christians.

It seems to me that they are in error, and that their error is a dangerous one—dangerous, I mean, not as being a mere speculative mistake in theology, or the true theory of the nature and attributes of God, but as being a practical hindrance to religion, or the divinely appointed means for the salvation and moral perfection of man. I wish to suggest a few considerations which I think tend to shew that the worship of God, so far as it is possible, apart from the worship of Christ, is less reasonable, less effectual to the great end of religion, and less secure against the danger of idolatry, than the worship of God in Christ as prescribed by the Catholic Church, and practised by the great body of Christians.

Let us consider to what extent, and under what conditions, it is possible for man to worship God.

When we endeavour to think of God, whether as an object of intellectual contemplation or of religious worship, we necessarily take our start from our own personality. Man, created in his image, is the only thing with which we can compare Him. When we seek to ascend from humanity towards Deity, we begin by divesting the human personality, as far as possible, of the conditions and limitations to which it is subject. We remove, in thought, matter and

form, and say that God is a spirit. We place Him above all local and temporal relations, and say that He is omnipresent and eternal. We remove as well as we can all restrictions to power and knowledge, all liability to change, all subjection to circumstance, and say that He is omnipotent, omniscient, and immutable. We ascribe to Him a perfection transcending all bounds and all determining modes of being, and say that He is infinite and absolute. So far the process is purely negative; we attribute no positive perfections; we only think away, as far as we are able, intellectual limitations and human conditions. And this is all that Philosophy can do. All her attempts to bring the Infinite Being in his absolute nature within the sphere of positive knowledge have proved a total failure. She can reveal nothing higher than a merely negative Perfection. But such a revelation of God, whatever purpose it might serve in philosophy, is manifestly insufficient for the purposes of religion. It is only when we attribute positive perfections—some form or forms of moral excellence—that we can begin to worship. And all positive perfections are necessarily human. “We may confidently challenge,” says Kant, “all natural Theology to name a single distinctive attribute of the Deity, whether denoting intelligence or will, which apart from anthropomorphism is anything more than a mere word.”<sup>1</sup> It follows that the worship of Deity is only possible to man upon condition of its manifestation in humanity. We can feel no reverence, no admiration, no confidence, no love towards God except in so far as we attribute to Him qualities of which we know nothing whatever, except as we know them in man. The more intently and successfully we strive to divest our idea of God of human attributes, in order as we hope to render our worship purer and more spiritual, the more completely we divest it of moral perfections, and consequently make worship impos-

<sup>1</sup> *Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft*, p. 282.

sible in the only sense in which it is a spiritually purifying and elevating, and therefore a religious, act.

It would be easy to adduce the testimony of philosophers and theologians in support of this truth. But it is not necessary. Let any one who doubts it make the experiment for himself. Let him form the most exalted conception of the most Divine Being whom it is possible for him to religiously worship. Let him try whether he can attribute to that Being a single element of moral character which is not essentially human, or conceive anything more divinely perfect than those elements blended in fair proportion and raised to their highest power. And he will find that it is beyond his reach. Any idea which he may form of God, if it be essentially different from, will be less divine than this. He may, indeed, clothe the divinely human ideal with the attributes of superhuman power and wisdom. But these are not moral qualities, and add nothing to the moral perfection of the Being conceived. A being less excellent than man may be indefinitely stronger and wiser. So, too, he may declare in words that the perfections which he ascribes to the Divine Object of his worship are infinite and absolute. But when he has said this, he will not have added one ray to the brightness of his previous conception, or made it one whit more powerful in moral influence. For it is only so far as any excellence is revealed within the finite sphere of our positive thought that it is a real thing to us; that which completely fills that sphere is perfect; and we can know and conceive no more. And in proportion as we think of goodness as approaching the absolute, the fainter it becomes in outline and the feebler in moral effect. A goodness unrelated, necessary, undefined, implying no effort, tried by no temptation, subject to no law, is destitute of the conditions under which alone we can realize it as *morally* good, and cannot in the nature of things, constituted as we are, excite our reverence and love so strongly, and

move us to so intense an energy of moral aspiration and action (the great end of all true worship), as a goodness believed indeed to be infinite though only apprehended as perfect, and manifested in the human forms of meekness, humility, moral courage, patient endurance, and self-sacrifice.

The conclusion from these considerations is obvious. God in Himself, as infinite and absolute, cannot be apprehended, cannot be loved, consequently cannot be religiously worshipped by men as they are. If, therefore, He would become an object of human worship to the end that humanity may be perfected and made divine, He must limit his infinity, condition his absolute nature, "empty Himself," to use the striking expression of the Apostle, of the fulness of the Godhead and make Himself man.

It is not meant, of course, that, in order to become an object of true worship to man, it was necessary that the Infinite Spirit should be made flesh and manifested in human form. We know that this was not necessary, for the end has been accomplished otherwise. All who believe in Christianity believe also in the Divine authority of Judaism. They consequently believe that the one true God, He who in the beginning created the heavens and the earth, revealed Himself, so far as their capacity for receiving the revelation would allow, to the Jewish nation, and became to them the object of a true, though, as compared with that of Christianity, an imperfect worship. And yet this true worship of the true God was made possible without an incarnation, and without a manifestation in form. No image of the Invisible was seen in his temple; no vision of his face, except in very special instances, was vouchsafed to his worshippers. They heard of Him only by the hearing of the ear; their eyes did not see Him. But though not manifested to the great body of the chosen people in a bodily form, He certainly was manifested to them in essential human nature. Though He was "the

High and Lofty One, who inhabited eternity, whose name was Holy." He was very far from being the *Ἀγνώστος Θεός*, the unknowable and inconceivable Essence, the characterless Abstraction, which He is to many modern, and was to some ancient, philosophers. On the contrary, He was a strictly personal Being, with a strongly-marked character, with very definite attributes, quite within the sphere of positive thought, revealed most literally in human nature so far as moral qualities are concerned, however superhuman in knowledge and power. He could be angry and repent, could rejoice and be grieved, could avenge Himself upon his enemies with a very stern indignation and comfort his people with a very tender pity. He was the God of Abraham in the most anthropopathic sense. Moses spake with Him familiarly, as a man speaketh with his friend. He was seen on earth in human form; and when the sublimest of the prophets looked into heaven, He was seen in human form even there. When Ezekiel "standing among the captives by the river Chebar saw the heavens opened and beheld visions of God;" when, after gazing at the mystic rings of the cherubim, "so high that they were dreadful," he had strength given him to lift his eyes above "the firmament of terrible crystal stretched forth over their heads," and to look at last upon the sapphire throne, he saw there no strange shape or indescribable symbol, but the "likeness as the appearance of A MAN."

And it is of course possible that the Divine Being should have made Himself known to mankind in later times, and still more fully, in like manner. So far as we can see, the Christ of Christianity might have been a revealer of the Divine character more perfectly even than the Jehovah of Judaism, though He had never been born of a woman or dwelt as a man among the sons of men. But, I suppose, no one can doubt that—assuming the great purpose which the Eternal Father had in view in seeking the loving wor-



ship of his children on earth to have been their perfection in goodness, the most effectual mode, so far as man can possibly conceive, by which He could accomplish this end would be by not merely revealing Himself in human nature, but by taking upon Himself human form and submitting to human circumstance. How could the excellencies which it most behoved us to love and follow after affect us so deeply and attract us so powerfully as by the Lord of Glory stooping to our low estate, taking upon Himself the form of a servant, speaking the "dear words of human speech," dying as we must die, rising from the dead as we hope to rise? How far more persuasive such an example than all the precepts which an apostle's or an angel's tongue could utter. How much better than any abstract idea an ideal thus realized. We, in our ignorance, may at times be tempted to think of such condescension to our infirmities as though it were beneath the dignity of Deity. But "our notions of unworthiness are themselves often the most unworthy of all."<sup>1</sup> We do dishonour to the Most High by fearing to trust his mercy and grace too far. We honour Him more by feeling confident that, if He could most effectually redeem us from the power of evil and raise us to virtue and true holiness by taking upon Him, not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, He would do it. If only He desired the end, He would not seek counsel of human wisdom, less wise than his "foolishness," in the choice of the appropriate means. If He took upon Him to deliver man, and to open the kingdom of heaven to all believers, we may reverently conclude that He would not abhor the virgin's womb, or refuse to undergo the sharpness of death, if only He could thus win our hearts more entirely to Himself, and so make our deliverance more complete and our entrance into his kingdom more abundant.

The worship given to the Divine Being by those who

<sup>1</sup> Duke of Argyll, in *Reign of Law*.

believe that He was manifested in Christ, so that whosoever hath seen the Son hath seen the Father, is an easy service, one that can be rendered by the simplest and the humblest as well as by the most highly gifted and carefully trained. It requires no special culture, no effort of abstract thinking, no intellectual subtlety or power; nothing but the moral virtues of sincerity and truth. When such a man bows the knee to the Father of Spirits, he may, and probably will, in the first place be solemnized by a sense of his majesty and glory, and will feel that he is as nothing and less than nothing before Him. So far, it is not religious worship properly so called, but only a preparation of the heart generally suitable for such an exercise. The "awful apprehension of the Divine Majesty,"<sup>1</sup> which such a contemplation induces would be induced by the contemplation of any being who was conceived of as great beyond measure, even though he were not apprehended as being also immeasurably good. If it ended there, it would be little more than the prostration of the soul before an irresistible power, depressing the moral nature instead of stimulating and strengthening it. When, however, the worshipper, ceasing to contemplate the greatness of the Most High, looks rather at his goodness, a different emotion is excited. In so far as that goodness is conceived of merely as a boundless, universal, essential benevolence, a feeling of admiration is awakened which, however elevated, is necessarily vague and moves the soul but faintly. But when that infinite benevolence, which is of the essence of Deity, is apprehended under such conditions as define it into goodness, in the human signification of the word, the emotion which

<sup>1</sup> From the Episcopal "form of prayer to be used at the consecration of Churches." I noticed that the late Bishop of St. David's (Dr. Thirlwall), when conducting in 1866 the service at the consecration of a church in his diocese, altered this phrase into "a due sense of the Divine perfections" (or to this effect), no doubt feeling that an "awful apprehension" was not that which man has most need (if, indeed, he has any right) to ask of God.

it awakens is far more intense. When the King of Glory, the Prince of Life, is seen as one who, for us men and our salvation, suffered shame and tasted of death; as one who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities; then, and not till then, is the soul moved to its depths, and made to give forth its best treasures; then only does the adoration of the intellect become that of the heart, and the worship grow truly religious. What though, when the conception is analysed, (if it be not almost profane to speak of analysing it,) it is perceived that the object of this loving adoration is not the Infinite and Absolute, but a Person of like nature with ourselves, perfect indeed, but in moral character perfectly human; what though the worshipper has drawn down the Eternal from his throne of brightness and is speaking to Him as friend to friend; what though the light he looks upon be not the effulgence of essential Deity, but the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ? He is oppressed by no sense of failure, no fear lest he has mistaken the true object of adoration. He believes that it was for this very purpose that the Word was made Flesh, that man might see the Invisible, and conceive the Inconceivable and know the otherwise unknown God. The Father and the Son blend in his view into a Divine Unity, one perfect object of worship to whom can be given with full assurance, with perfect freedom, at once the profoundest admiration of the intellect and the warmest love of the heart.

Far otherwise is it, or at least in logical consistency should it be, with those who do not accept this revelation. When they address the "Being of Beings" to whom alone, in their theory, religious worship can rightly be given, the exercise is one of no small difficulty. They must by no means conceive of Him as in human form:—this would be to degrade the spiritual object of their worship, and to render themselves chargeable with anthropomorphism.

They must not conceive of Him as a being essentially human, however perfectly so, or they would become chargeable with anthropopathy. The infinite goodness, which they believe to be his, must be conceived of as necessary, unchangeable, universal benevolence, and must not—except in a qualified and merely figurative sense—be regarded as the same thing with the human goodness which is produced by effort, and made perfect through suffering. When, on the other hand, they contemplate Christ, they are beset by similar difficulty from the opposite side. By their own admission He is the ideal of human excellence, and, as such, He necessarily receives from all who rightly apprehend his character an all but unbounded reverence and love. But the love and reverence must not be quite unbounded, or they would usurp the place of the supreme affection and the true worship which must be given to God alone. They must be jealously watched and carefully guarded lest they go too far and become idolatry. And thus there is caution and restraint instead of confidence and freedom. The two great ideals of Deity and perfect humanity tend ever, in the worshipper's despite, to blend and become one; and if he would preserve his consistency and avoid confusion, he must divide his devotion, giving a portion only to each—as much of intellectual adoration as he can to the Father, and as much of religious worship as he dares to the Son. To neither, if they are sundered and kept apart, can be given the full, undivided, supreme love and worship of the soul.

I speak of course of the logical consequences of the system, and not of the practical devotion of its adherents. With many, no doubt, the theory governs the practice, and the result is what might be expected—a worship highly ethereal and refined, it may be, but refined into weakness and etherealized into coldness; a comparatively passionless, and therefore, in a religious point of view, profitless, contemplation of an abstract idea. But in the case of many

others who accept this theory, their spiritual instincts are too strong for their logic; and, in spite of the interdict of their speculative theology, they give their worship to Christ. They do not, indeed, call it by the name of worship, but it is so none the less,<sup>1</sup> far more truly so than any merely intellectual exercise,—far mightier in beneficial effect upon the spiritual nature of man and consequently more acceptable in the sight of God. For it is surely not worthy of a “rational Christian” to suppose that the Almighty desires from men any worship that does not make them better as moral beings. It is surely an unreasonable notion, which many however seem to entertain, that He is pleased with praise for its own sake;—that He accepts with complacency any adoration which *ends* in the intellectual contemplation of his perfections, and does not pass on and become a means to the spiritual improvement of the worshipper. True it is that He has made all things for his own glory. But it is equally true that his glory as the Creator and Redeemer of men can only be displayed by them according to the measure in which they attain to their chief perfection—the perfection of their spiritual nature. By growing into his image in all things,—thus and thus only can they truly glorify Him. They please Him best who imitate Him most.<sup>2</sup> Apart from sympathy with his moral character, bodily exercise, and even mental exercise, profit little. And that the worship of Christ—that is of God in Christ—is more effectual to this end, is a more direct and powerful means of inducing aspiration and effort after and growth in goodness than the worship of any being beside, few, I think, who seriously consider the question, will deny.

<sup>1</sup> “If the lowliest reverence and the most enthusiastic love constitute adoration, Dr. Channing worshipped Christ. I care not what a man says. What care I if Dr. Channing adores, *saying* that he does not adore.”—*F. W. Robertson; Life*, vol. i. p. 284.

<sup>2</sup> “Vis Deos propitiare? bonus esto. Satis illos coluit quisquis imitatus est.”—*Seneca, Ep.* 95.



This, at any rate, has been the conviction of the Catholic Church in all ages. Others, beguiled by a false philosophy, might essay to pass beyond the Incarnate Word and worship the Deity immediately and in Himself; in the view of the great body of believers this is to reject the divinely-appointed means in the vain hope of otherwise more effectually attaining the desired end. From the beginning they have been accustomed *carmina Christo quasi Deo dicere* ("to sing hymns to Christ as God"). They have accepted, in their fullest meaning, the words: "No man cometh to the Father but by me. Whosoever hath seen me hath seen the Father:—how sayest thou, then, Shew us the Father?"

It is a matter of unquestionable fact that to this conclusion almost all have come who have sought from the inspired Word to discover the Divine will. Whatever difference of opinion there may be as to the purpose of God in giving Christ to the world, there can be no dispute as to the actual result of the gift. Whether it were so intended or not, it is certain that Christ has in practical effect become "very God" to the vast majority of Christians. It is not a matter of choice with them whether they will worship Him or not; worship follows necessarily upon the contemplation of his character. They "needs must love the highest when they see it," and they see the highest excellence in Him. Most true it is that they believe and are sure that, in giving their supreme love to that Divine Humanity, they are supremely loving that in the Deity which alone is to man a possible object of affection. But if this belief be for a moment supposed mistaken, the fact itself remains, and it is a significant fact. The man Christ Jesus stands to the great body of his followers in the place of God; and, if He does not fully reveal Him, He *conceals* Him. If to worship Him be an error, the design of God in giving Him to the world has been frustrated, and his honour taken from Him by the Son whom He sent, and in whom He is always well pleased.

I have said that the doctrine of the manifestation of God in the flesh is a reasonable doctrine, far more so than that which seeks to proscribe it in the name of Reason. If it be reasonable to believe that the Divine Being desires the moral perfection of man, then it is reasonable to believe that He has appointed such means as will most effectually attain that end. If it be true that moral sympathy with supreme excellence is of all means that best fitted to develope and perfect human excellence, then it is reasonable to believe that He who only is good has revealed his character to man; and revealed it under such conditions as render possible its clearest apprehension and its warmest love. If it be true that the Divine character thus revealed could be apprehended more clearly and loved more fervently were it embodied in human form and displayed in human circumstance, than it could be if it were only described in words or shadowed forth in type and symbol—then it is reasonable to believe that He did not stop half-way in his sublime condescension, his glorious humiliation, but became in the fullest sense a partaker of our nature, to the end that He might thus become in the fullest sense also the Saviour and Redeemer of our race.

If we may not accept this manifestation of Deity in humanity there is for us no true worship. We may still have some sort of a metaphysical God; but, like the great philosophical historian of Germany<sup>1</sup> we “shall not know what to do with him.” We cannot love him, for he has no heart; we cannot worship him, for there can be no worship without love. We must say of the teachers of this refined theosophy, but most ineffectual religion, what the broken-hearted hermit said of the well-meaning but unwise theologians who had robbed him of his old—and, whatever

<sup>1</sup> Niebuhr. “I have often said” (he wrote in 1818) “that I do not know what to do with a metaphysical God, and that I will have none but the God of the Bible who is heart to heart with us.”—*Life and Letters of Niebuhr*, vol. ii, p. 123.

error there may have been mixed up it—his essentially true idea of the Christian Deity: “Unhappy that we are! they have taken away our God, and we have nothing left us that we can apprehend, nothing left us that we can worship.”<sup>1</sup>

If it be said that the Incarnation is inconceivable I admit that it is so. We can no more imagine to ourselves the mode in which “very God” could be also truly man, we can no more understand how the Omnipotent could be manifested in weakness and the Unchangeably Blessed in self-sacrifice and suffering, than we can understand many of the other mysteries by which we are encompassed. But that it is inconceivable in any such sense as to make it unreasonable to believe it, I confidently deny. To my mind the contrary theory is rather inconceivable and incredible. I cannot imagine a mode in which the Infinite Spirit could ever manifest Himself—I do not say to man only, but to any, even the highest, created being—otherwise than by so conditioning his essence as that it should be, not what it is in itself, but the chief perfection which that lofty, but still limited, intelligence can apprehend. I can hardly believe that Michael or Gabriel looks upon the unveiled face of God. I can more easily believe that, for all beings capable of worship, the Eternal Word is—not it may be made flesh—but made such that they can contemplate without confusion, and love without restraint; that not for men only but for all created intelligences the saying is true: “No one knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him.”

<sup>1</sup> “Ita est in oratorio senex mente confusus eo quod illam ἀνθρωπομόρφον imaginem Deitatis quam proponere sibi in oratione consueverat aboleri de suo corde sentiret, ut in amarissimos fletus crebrosque singultus repente prorumpens, in terram prostratus, cum ejulatu validissimo proclamaret:—‘Heu me miserum! tulerunt a me Deum meum, et quem nunc teneam non habeo, vel quem adorem aut interpellam jam nescio!’”—Cassian Collat., x. 2. (Quoted by Gibbon, *Decline, etc.*, c. 47.)

This is perhaps an idle speculation ; at best it is a speculation only. We cannot by searching find out the absolute nature of God or know the manner of its manifestation to other beings in other worlds. For us it is enough if we give our supreme worship to the brightest and most perfect manifestation of the Divine Glory which we can find in this world. And *we* see that glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

If any man can make unto himself a mental image of the Divine Glory brighter and more perfect than this, he will do well to bow down before it and worship it. But if the image be less bright and less perfect, if it be little more than an abstract idea, if it be destitute of any of the features of moral excellence which we behold in Christ, or if those features are beheld less clearly, then it will not be the highest and worthiest representation of the Supreme Goodness which is attainable by man, and the worship given to it will consequently be but a form—though it may be the most refined form—of idolatry. And it will not be the less so because the idol is called ‘God.’

For my own part I cannot believe that any man will ever be able to attain otherwise so clear a vision of God as that which can be attained by fixing the eye of the mind and the soul steadfastly upon Christ. And if this be so, it is surely greatly to be regretted that so many religious teachers should feel it their duty to forbid their followers to worship God as thus manifested ; and, by so doing, exclude them from what reason and long experience combine to prove to be the most direct and powerful of all possible means of spiritual development ; leaving them no alternative but the contemplation either of the cold abstraction which is all that Philosophy can reveal, or at the best of an ideal of excellence which is as really human as that presented in the person and life of Christ, and only differs from it in being an ideal never realized, fainter, and less perfect.

T. M. HOME.

## ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN INSCRIPTIONS IN THEIR BEARING ON THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

### III. THE DELUGE.

HERE also, as in the case of the narrative of the Creation, the earlier students of Comparative History had been struck with the parallelism presented by the traditions of other nations. The most familiar of these was naturally the Greek myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha as related by Ovid in his "*Metamorphoses*" (i. 260-415). Here also the sins of mankind are visited by a plague of waters, and men and brutes are alike destroyed; and the flood covers the earth, and Deucalion, with his wife Pyrrha, alone remains, as the only righteous man.

"Non illo melior quisquam, nec amantior æqui  
Vir fuit, aut illa metuentior ulla deorum."

"None more than he more virtuous, none who loved  
The right more truly, and than she were found  
None walking firmer in the fear of God."

They are saved in a boat which floats through the surging seas, and for their sakes Jupiter bids the waters abate; and first the summits of the mountains, and then the forests and the fields, reappear, and the boat rests upon the summit of Parnassus. From them the earth is replenished, as the story ran, by stones which they threw upon the ground, and which became men and women, while the earth spontaneously brings forth the lower forms of animal life, and enters on another stage of its history. As the "*Metamorphoses*" were written after Ovid had been banished to Pontus, it is not improbable that they may represent an Asiatic tradition. If such a tradition is shewn on independent evidence to have existed in or near the region of his exile, that probability will approximate proportionably to a certainty.



In one form of the Deucalion legend it may be noted that he is said to have sent forth a dove to see whether the waters were abated (Plut. *De Solert. Anim.*, *Opp.*, p. 1783, c.) ; but this feature may have been derived, looking to the date of Plutarch, either from the Chaldæan or the Jewish traditions. It is significant from this point of view that no trace of the Deluge story is found in earlier Greek writers, like Homer, Hesiod, and Herodotus, though the latter names Deucalion as one of the first kings of the Hellenes.

The legends of Phrygia supply the missing link. They told, as related by Stephanus of Byzantium, of a righteous prophet named Annacos, whom Ewald (*Gesch. Israel.*, vol. i. p. 356) identifies with Enoch, and who prophesied of the flood that was coming on the earth. He lived, the legend ran, for three hundred years, and was worshipped at Iconium. In close connexion with this tradition we have the well-known coins or medals which were struck at Apamæa Kibôtos (the last word is the same as that used in the LXX. for the "ark" of Noah), in the times of the Emperors Severus, Philip, and Macrinus, and which represent on their reverse two male and female figures, seated in a boat or open chest, and then emerging from it. On the chest appears the name of *NΩE* = Noah, and two birds are hovering over it (Eckhel, *Doctr. Numism.*, vol. iii. pp. 132-139) ; and one of the birds bears an olive-branch in its claws. It is obvious that this looks like an attempt to represent, much after the same fashion of art as we see in mediæval illuminations or stained glass windows, the history of the Deluge as given in Genesis viii. 8-11, and no other interpretation of the device has been suggested that commends itself as at all tenable. The late date of the medals, however, forbids our seeing in them direct evidence of a tradition independent of the Bible. By that time Jews had found their way into all parts of Asia Minor with the LXX. version of the Old Testament, and its story may have coalesced

with the floating earlier legends of Deucalion. Professor Rawlinson<sup>1</sup> has suggested a sufficiently probable explanation of the fact, that Apamæa, rather than any other city, may have borne the name Kibôtos as =ark, or treasure chest, on account of the stored up wealth for which it had been famous. Jewish or other readers of the LXX. would be attracted by the word which was so closely associated with the history of the Deluge in that version, and would easily be led to think that it pointed to some connexion. Armenia and Phrygia were not far remote. The latter was believed Herod., ii. 20 to be the cradle of the human race, and it might seem a natural step to place the mountain on which the ark rested in Phrygia; all the more natural if there was already a deluge tradition floating there in the memories of men. That Apamæa was about this time popularly identified with the ark's resting place is sufficiently seen from a passage in the *Sibylline Oracles* (i. 268-274), quoted by Professor Rawlinson :

“There is a mount in the dark Phrygian land,  
Lofty, far-stretching, Ararat 'tis named ;  
Since on that mount 'twas fated that mankind  
Should find salvation and much wished-for rest ;  
There Marsyas, mighty stream, doth take his rise,  
And there, when the floods sank, on the high crest  
Rested the ark.”

The Marsyas, it may be noted, rises close to Apamæa.

To the general diffusion of the Biblical tradition from the date of the LXX. version we may fairly ascribe the knowledge of the deluge history which we find in Hecataeus of Abdera, Nicolaus of Damascus, and other Greek writers; and with these second hand reports of an earlier narrative we need not further concern ourselves.

The case is far otherwise with the latest addition to the evidence of a primitive and widely diffused narrative of a

<sup>1</sup> “Bible Educator,” vol. i. p. 35.

deluge, running parallel to that of Genesis vi.-viii., which has been brought to light by Mr. George Smith in the legends of the Assyrian hero, Izdubar, whom he identifies with Nimrod.<sup>1</sup> His version of those legends has been published both in his "Chaldæan Account of Genesis," and in an enlarged and revised form in "Records of the Past" (vol. vii. pp. 133-147). The tablets on which the legends are engraved belong, in Mr. Smith's judgment, like those that record the history of Creation, to the reign of Assurbanipal, in the seventh century B.C.

The earlier tablets, which are much mutilated, seem to have related various adventures of Izdubar, more or less after the type of those of Hercules. On the tenth he crosses the waters of death and reaches the abode of the immortals, where he finds Hasisadra, whom Mr. George Smith ("Chaldæan History," p. 257) identifies with Noah. From him he hears the tale of the Deluge, and this is given in the Eleventh Tablet. The translation of that Tablet as given in *R. P.* (vol. vii. pp. 135-149), is too long for insertion *in extenso*, and in many parts is very fragmentary. I content myself with the passages which present the most striking parallelisms with the Genesis history.

Hasisadra after this manner also said to Izdubar,  
Be revealed to thee Izdubar the concealed story,  
And the judgment of the gods be related to thee.

\* \* \* \* \*

The God, Lord of Hades,  
Their will be revealed in the midst . . . and  
I his will was hearing and he spake to me.

\* \* \* \* \*

. . . Make a ship, after this  
. . . I destroy the sinner and life.

Cause to ascend in the seed of life, all of it, to the midst of the ship.

<sup>1</sup> The identification is, however, far from being accepted generally by Assyriologists.

The ship which thou shalt make,  
 600 (?) cubits shall be the measure of its length  
 60 (?) cubits the amount of its breadth and its height.  
 . . . Into the deep launch it.

I perceived and said to Hea my Lord :

"Hea my Lord, this that thou commandest me

. . . I will perform, it shall be done.

I shall be derided by young men and old men."

Hea opened his mouth and spake and said to me his servant :

\* \* \* \*

"Enter into it, and the door of the ship turn,

Into the midst of it thy grain, thy furniture and thy goods,

Thy wealth, thy women servants, thy female slaves and the young  
 men,

The beasts of the field, the animals of the field, all I will gather  
 and

I will send to thee and they shall be enclosed in thy door.

\* \* \* \*

Fourteen measures it measured . . . over it

I placed its roof . . . I enclosed it.

I rode in it on the sixth time, examined its exterior on the seventh  
 time,

Its interior I examined on the eighth time,

Planks against the waters within it I placed.

I saw the rents and the wanting parts I added,

Three measures of bitumen I poured over the outside.

\* \* \* \*

All I possessed, the strength of it, gold,

All I possessed, the strength of it, the seed of life, the whole.

I caused to go up into the ship all my male servants and my  
 female servants,

The beasts of the field, the animal of the field, the sons of the  
 people, all of them I caused to go up.

A flood Shamas<sup>1</sup> made and

He spake saying, "In the night I will cause it to rain from  
 heaven,

Enter into the midst of the ship and shut thy door."

\* \* \* \*

I entered into the midst of my ship and shut my door.

<sup>1</sup> Shamas = the Sun-God.

\* \* \* \* \*

The raging of a storm in the morning  
 Arose, from the horizon of heaven extending far and wide,  
 VUL<sup>1</sup> in the midst of it thundered, and  
 NEBO and SARU went in front.  
 The throne bearers went over mountains and plains,  
 The destroyer NERGAL overturned,  
 NINIP went in front and cast down,  
 The spirits carried destruction,  
 In their glory they swept the earth;  
 Of VUL the flood reached to heaven,  
 The bright earth to a waste was turned.  
 The surface of the earth like . . . it swept;  
 It destroyed all life from the face of the earth;  
 The strong deluge over the people reached to heaven.  
 Brother saw not his brother, it did not spare the people.

\* \* \* \* \*

Six days and nights  
 Passed; the wind, deluge, and storm, overwhelmed.  
 On the seventh day in its course was calmed the storm, and all the  
     deluge  
 Which had destroyed like an earthquake,  
 Quieted. The sea he caused to dry, and the wind and deluge  
     ended.  
 I perceived the sea making a tossing,  
 And the whole of mankind turned to corruption,  
 Like reeds the corpses floated,  
 I opened the window, and the light broke over my face;  
 It passed. I sat down and wept,  
 Over my face flowed my tears.  
 I perceived the shore at the boundary of the sea,  
 For twelve measures the land rose.  
 To the country of Nizir went the ship:  
 The mountain of Nizir stopped the ship, and to pass over it it  
     was not able.

\* \* \* \* \*

On the seventh day in the course of it  
 I sent forth a dove and it left. The dove went out, and turned  
 and

<sup>1</sup> Vul, Nebo, Ninip, Saru, Nergal = names of Assyrian deities.



A resting place it did not find, and it returned.

I sent forth a swallow and it left. The swallow went and turned,  
and

A resting place it did not find, and it returned.

I sent forth a raven and it left;

The raven went and the corpses on the water it saw, and

It did eat, it swam and wandered away, and did not return.

I sent the animals forth to the four winds. I poured out a  
libation.

I built an altar on the peak of the mountain:

By seven jugs of wine I took;

At the bottom of them I placed reeds, pines, and spices,

The gods collected at its burning,<sup>1</sup> the gods collected at its good  
burning.<sup>2</sup>

It is sufficiently obvious that this and the Genesis history of the flood must have had a common source, or that the former must have been a legendary, and, so to speak, mythicised version of the latter. The agreement in many details, such as the command to make the ark (Gen. vi. 13, 14), the proportions of its structure (Gen. vi. 15), its being covered with pitch within and without (Gen. vi. 14), the destruction of all flesh (Gen. vii. 21), the sending forth of the raven and the dove (Gen. viii. 7-11), the resting of the ark upon a mountain (Gen. viii. 4), the sacrifice of sweet savour when the floods abated (Gen. viii. 21), is, it will be admitted, singularly striking. The independence of the two narratives is, on the other hand, shewn: (1) in the addition of the swallow to the raven and the dove in the Chaldean narrative; (2) in the shorter duration of the deluge; (3) in the touching picture of Hasisadra weeping when he leaves the ship and sees the floating corpses; and (4) in the absence of any allusion to the rainbow as the sign of the covenant that the great catastrophic judgment being over, the reign of law, the orderly succession of winter and summer, seed-time and harvest, should not cease (Gen. viii. 22).

<sup>1</sup> "Herbs." G. Smith.

<sup>2</sup> "Savour." G. Smith.

To this Chaldæan version of the story we are now able to trace the narrative of the Deluge given by Berosus, which had previously been looked upon as derived from the Genesis history, but which now appears, like his account of the Creation, to be based upon the tablets of Assurbanipal. It will be sufficient to give a summary of that narrative. The Deluge, he relates (Cory's *Ancient Fragments*, pp. 26-29), happened in the reign of Xisuthrus (the name is probably a Græcised form of the Hasisadra of the Izdubar legends). He is told by Kronos (obviously given as the Greek equivalent for the Assyrian god Hea), to build a vessel, to fill it with provisions, and to enter it with birds and beasts of various kinds. He built a ship five stadia in length and two in breadth. He also sent out birds when the waters abated, and at first they found no resting place, the second time they came back with mud upon their feet, the third time they returned not. The vessel rested upon the peak of a mountain in Armenia, and in the time of Berosus the bitumen which was scraped off from what was shewn as its relic was in high esteem as a charm. Xisuthrus, on leaving the ark, offered sacrifices to the gods, and then disappeared, and when men sought him, a voice came from heaven and told them that he had passed (like the Hasisadra of the Izdubar legends) to the abode of the gods, and the people who were left went from the land of Armenia, where the ark had rested, to Babylon.

What was probably a later version of the same tradition is quoted by Josephus (*Ant.*, i. 3), from the history of Nicolaus of Damascus, a Greek writer of the time of Augustus: "There is a great mountain in Armenia, over Minyæ, called Baris" (a Greek word for "ark") "upon which it is reported that many who fled at the time of the Deluge were saved, and that one who was carried in an ark came on shore on the top of it, and that the remains of the timber were a great while preserved. This might be the

man about whom Moses, the legislator of the Jews, wrote." Nicolaus, it may be mentioned, was on terms of intimacy with the Herodian family (Jos., *Ant.*, xii. 3, 9; xvii. 9), and therefore likely to have become familiar with the Jewish records.

The account, though much briefer, agrees with that of Berossus as to a mountain in Armenia having been the resting place. In the local name which was either the starting point of the tradition, or rose out of it, we find a parallel to the Kibôtos (ark) which was attached to the name of Apamea, and are led to the inference that from the time of Alexander the Great (the date of Berossus) to that of Septimius Severus (the date of the Apamean medals) there were two cities in the same region of Asia which sought to identify their history with that of the Deluge, and boasted of possessing the relics of the vessel in which the fathers of mankind had been preserved.

Parallel traditions have been found, it may be added, in Persia, India, China, and in connection with different forms of faith. In that of Persia the flood is sent by Ormuzd to punish the evil works of Ahriman. In China, Fuh-he, who occupies a position like that of Prometheus as the author of civilization, appears as having escaped from the waters of a flood with his wife, three daughters, and three sons, by whom the desolated world was re peopled (Hardwicke, *Christ and Other Masters*, ii. 18, ed. 1863); and in a paper communicated by Dr. Gutzlaff to the Asiatic Society (*Journal*, vol. xvi. p. 79), he describes a relief in a Buddhist temple where Kwan-Yin the goddess of mercy looks upon a lonely figure, the counterpart of Noah, floating in an ark with dolphins swimming around him, and a dove with an olive branch flying towards him. The Indian legend given in the Mahabharata relates that Brahma appeared to the righteous Manu, and bids him prepare for the coming deluge by building a ship, and placing in it all kinds of seeds

with the seven Rishis or holy beings. Brahma himself in the shape of a horned fish draws the ark, and finally lands it on the loftiest summit of Mount Himarat (= Himalaya), where the ship is made fast, and the mountain receives the name of Naubaudhena (= ship-binding), and Manu empowered by Brahma creates a new race of men to fill the earth. (Hardwicke, *Christ and Other Masters*, iii. 312, ed. 1863.) Even the Koran account, though naturally based upon the Jewish record, introduces features, which seem derived from some form of the Chaldæan legends, such as the derision which Noah encountered when announcing the coming of the flood, and the resting of the ark not on Ararat, but on *Al-djudi*, which is identified with the Gordyeen or Kurdistan mountains on the borders of Armenia and Mesopotamia.<sup>1</sup> (*Sura xi*.)

#### IV. THE TOWER OF BABEL.

It was to be expected that some traces of this history also, on any hypothesis of a connexion between the Genesis record and that of Chaldæan writers, would be found in the records left by the latter. No such trace, however, is found in the extant fragments of the Chaldæan historian Berosus, or in the works of any other Greek writer who had access to Babylonian traditions. In the absence of any such evidence, Mr. George Smith's discovery of a tradition which is obviously the counterpart of the Biblical story has a special claim to attention. The tablet marked as K. 3657 in the British Museum is in a very broken condition, and most of the lines are incomplete. It has been translated by Mr. George Smith in his "Chaldæan Account of Genesis,"

<sup>1</sup> I must acknowledge my obligations for the facts brought together in this paragraph to Dean Perowne's elaborate article on Noah in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible." Other traditions among the Mexicans, the Cherokees, and the Fiji islanders mentioned by him I pass over, interesting as they are in themselves, as having no direct connexion with the Chaldæan legends.

p. 160, and by Mr. W. St. Chad Boscawen in *Records of the Past*, vol. vii. p. 129. I quote from the latter, noting the variations which it presents on a comparison with the former. It evidently follows on an account of the building of a tower by a sinful people.

## COL. I.

. . . of them the father  
 (The thoughts) of his heart were evil,  
 . . . the father of all the gods he turned from.  
 . . . Babylon corruptly to sin went<sup>1</sup>  
 Small and great mingled on the mound,<sup>2</sup>  
 . . . Babylon corruptly to sin went,  
 Small and great mingled on the mound.

## COL. II.

The king of the holy mounds,<sup>3</sup> . . .  
 In front and Anu lifted up . . .  
 To the good god<sup>4</sup> his father.  
 Then his heart also . . .  
 Which carried a command<sup>5</sup> . . .  
 At that time also . . .  
 He lifted it up . . .  
 Dav-kina.  
 Their (work) all day they founded.  
 To their stronghold in the night  
 Entirely an end he made.<sup>6</sup>  
 In his anger also the secret counsel he poured out,  
 To scatter abroad his face he set,  
 He gave a command to make strange their speech,  
 . . . their progress he impeded.

Col. III. is reported by Mr. Boscawen to be too mutilated for translation, and he proceeds to give what is decipherable

<sup>1</sup> "Babylon brought to subjection." G. S.

<sup>2</sup> "Small and great he confounded their speech." G. S.

<sup>3</sup> "Sar-tul-elli." G. S.

<sup>4</sup> "Bel-sara." G. S.

<sup>5</sup> "Which carried wisdom." G. S.

<sup>6</sup> "My son I rise and . . . his number (?) entirely . . ." G. S.



from Col. IV., which records the intervention of NU-NAM-NIR, a name which he interprets as the god of "no rule" or lawlessness.

## COL. IV.

NU-NAM-NIR went . . .  
 Like heaven and earth he spake . . .  
 His ways they went . . .  
 Violently they fronted against him,  
 He saw them and to the earth descended,  
 When a stop he did not make  
 Of the gods . . .  
 Against the gods they revolted.<sup>1</sup>  
 . . . violence  
 Violently they wept for Babylon,  
 Very much they wept.

Imperfect as the narrative is, and great as are the variations in the two renderings, it is clear that where they agree, they speak of a tradition which presents many points of parallelism with the history of the tower of Babel in Gen. xi. 1-9. The local colouring of that history lies on the surface. The tower is raised in the land of Shinar, the Mesopotamia of Greek geographers. The builders use "slime" or asphalte for their work, to cement the baked bricks which they used instead of stone. The name of the city is connected with the confusion of tongues, the many mingled dialects for which that region was conspicuous.

To this reference to the Babel tradition M. Lenormant (vol. i. p. 23), following in the footsteps of M. Oppert, adds another scarcely less interesting. The site of the tower which was thus left incomplete has been identified by nearly all Assyriologists with the Birs Nimroud (= Tower of Nimrod) which still remains at Borsippa, in the immediate vicinity of Babylon, rising 153 feet above the level of the

<sup>1</sup> "The gods looked." G. S.

plain. In its ruins cylinders were found by Sir H. Rawlinson in 1854, which belong to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and record the work of that monarch in restoring what he describes as "the Temple of the Planet, which is the Tower of Babylon." It was constructed by him of burnt bricks, the material used in most of the Babylonian buildings. In older buildings, which represent the architecture of the period to which the Tower of Babel is referred, the bricks are found laid in mud, or bitumen, as in the Genesis history; and this, it is a reasonable inference, was probably the original structure of the Birs Nimroud itself.

As M. Oppert translates the inscription, the part which he supposes to refer to the Bible history runs thus.

"The Tower of the Seven Stages, the Eternal House, the Temple of the Seven Luminaries of the Earth (the seven planets), to which is attached the most ancient legend of Borsippa, which the first king built without being able to finish the work."

"Men had abandoned it since the days of the Deluge, speaking their words in disorder. The earthquake and lightning had shaken the crude brickwork of the revetment, the crude brick of the upper storeys had crumbled down into mere piles."

So rendered, the inscription seems to point to a tradition extant in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, that the great tower had been built soon after the deluge to which the Izdubar legends refer, that its erection had been interrupted by some catastrophic disaster, and that that interruption was accompanied by something like a confusion of tongues. On this assumption it is at least a conceivable hypothesis that Nebuchadnezzar's intercourse with the Jewish exiles at Babylon, and his acquaintance with their sacred records, had revived and, it may be, re-shaped the old Chaldean legend as to the original construction of the Birs Nimroud.

It is right, however, to add that both Sir H. Rawlinson

(Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, ii. 485) and Mr. H. Fox Talbot (*R. P.*, vii. 73) give a translation of this part of the inscription which deprives it of the parallelism with the Biblical narrative presented by M. Oppert's version. I quote from the latter of the two :

"The Temple of the Seven Planets, which is the tower of Borsippa,  
Which former kings had built ;  
And raised it to the height of forty-two cubits,  
But had not finished its upper parts,  
From extreme old age had rotted away,  
The watersprings beneath it had not been kept in order ;  
The rain and the tempest  
Had ruined its buildings :  
The slabs that covered it had fallen off,  
The bricks of its wall lay scattered in heaps."

Here, it is obvious, we have what might have been true in the time of Nebuchadnezzar of any ancient building. There is no reference to the flood, as such, nor to any confusion of tongues, nor any violent interruption of the building. The tower had fallen into decay through defective drainage and the wear and tear of weather. It is right to add that M. Oppert adheres to his translation, after duly weighing the arguments urged against it.

E. H. PLUMPTRE.

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## BRIEF NOTICES.

THE PROPHETS OF ISAIAH. A New Translation, with Commentary and Appendices, by *the Rev. T. K. Cheyne, M.A.* (London: C. Kegan Paul & Co.). Vol. II. Of the first volume of Mr. Cheyne's Commentary we have already spoken in high, but well deserved, terms of praise. Honest, able, original, are epithets which are sure to rise in the mind of every competent reader of his work. And while the critical and exegetical notes of this second volume are to the full as valuable and instructive as those of the first, it gathers a still greater value and interest from the illustrative essays appended to it: for it is in these essays that most of the problems suggested by the prophecies of Isaiah are worked out. Of all these eleven essays it may be said that, whether we agree or disagree with the conclusions which the learned author has reached, critics of every school must be impressed by the studious honesty and fair-mindedness by which they are marked, and can only venture to differ from him with reluctance and diffidence. Two of these essays—the one on “the Christian element in Isaiah,” and the other on “the Servant of Jehovah”—are indeed of commanding interest, and go as near to an adequate and final solution of the questions they raise as, under present conditions, we can hope to get. And of these two, again, the former has the additional interest of being virtually a chapter in the author's mental biography. He assures us that it was “with some reluctance” that he has said so much of the course and development of his own train of thought; but it is well for his readers that he conquered that reluctance. It is long since we read anything of equal interest with the pages in which he describes how he was “surprised” into accepting “a definitely *Christian* interpretation of the Old Testament,” compelled to believe that the Psalms and the Prophets contain a distinctly predictive element pointing to the historical Messiah, now foreshadowing special circumstances in the life of Christ, and now giving “distinct pictures” of Him who suffered for our sins.

We have not space to discuss the principles laid down and the conclusions reached in this fine Commentary; but we heartily and emphatically commend it to our readers, and especially advise them to master the Essays with which it concludes.

IN A COMMENTARY ON ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, by *Joseph Agar Beet* (London: Hodder and Stoughton), we have another book which has already been introduced to the readers of the EXPOSITOR. Both Dr. Sanday and the Editor (*First Series*, Vol. IX.) have spoken of it in terms of warm approval. Indeed it was by this book that Mr. Beet "made himself known to his brethren" as a critic and expositor of the first class. And it is as true now as it was when the book first appeared that, for the English reader, there is no better commentary on St. Paul's greatest epistle, if we ought not rather to call it, the greatest theological treatise the world has ever seen. For this second edition Mr. Beet has revised the whole work, verifying every quotation. And, above all, he has dispensed with most of those irritating "abbreviations" of words in common use on which we were obliged to animadvert in noticing his first edition. In this second edition, therefore, the reader may be sure that he will get the best book on the Romans in its best form.

The Church of Christ in these realms suffered a great loss by the premature death of the Rev. P. Thomson, M.A., of St. Fergus, although his name was so little known among us. And for the readers of the EXPOSITOR his death is a special loss. They will, many of them, remember a very striking article of his on "Nebuchadnezzar's Conquest of Egypt," which appeared in Vol. X. of the *First Series*, and in which he drew from a contemporary hieroglyphic inscription an inexpugnable confirmation of the conquest of Egypt minutely predicted by the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel—a prediction which had been pronounced by Kuenen and the sceptical school of critics to be a mere guess, falsified by the event; and this article was to have been followed by other essays, Mr. Thomson having promised that he would keep the readers of this Magazine posted up in any similar discoveries that might be made. Some of our readers may also remember another paper of his on "The Call and Commission of Isaiah," which appeared in Vol. XI.; and these will be glad to see that a second paper, "God in Nature and in History," is commenced in the present number, in which he continues the effort he then began to trace the various methods in which of old time God revealed his will to men.

As many as cared for his work will do well to obtain a little Bible Class Primer on THE LIFE OF DAVID, by the late Rev. Peter Thomson,



M.A. (Edinburgh: Macniven and Wallace), which has recently issued from the press. It is, I believe, the first of a series of small primers, edited by Professor Salmond, of Aberdeen, and may be had for a few pence. There are many who, if they had undertaken a work so slight, would have been content to write it without much labour or study; but it was Mr. Thomson's habit to do well and thoroughly whatever he did at all. And it is very pleasant to see how much real labour and ability he has thrown into a task which many would have thought neither very exacting nor very urgent. It is obvious that he had prepared himself for it by translating both from the Hebrew and the Septuagint the scriptures which record the life of David: that he had carefully studied the geographical facts involved in it, with whatever would enable him to delineate with full and accurate knowledge the strange eventful story he had taken in hand. And yet he has told that story in the simplest language and the briefest compass, so that even the children in a Sunday School class may read it with understanding and without weariness, while even the most accomplished scholar will find hints in it which will be welcome and helpful to him. The perusal of it cannot fail to quicken a deeper regret at the loss we have all suffered in losing him. And if the other primers of this series approach the mark which he here touches, they will be invaluable to the very large class for whom they are intended.

Is it asking too much to demand in these days that, before any man rushes into print, he should at least have mastered the simplest rules of grammar? If that is not too high a standard to set up, may not a reviewer fairly hold himself released from any further examination of a book in which those rules are frequently and glaringly violated? In the introduction to *JESUS CHRIST'S MODE OF PRESENTING HIMSELF TO THE WORLD, A PROOF OF HIS DIVINE MISSION AND SUPERNATURAL WORK*, by the *Rev. John Cooper*, (who claims on his title-page to be the author of several previous works), the following sentences occur, the first of which, it will be seen, "never finds earthly close":—

"It was otherwise, however, with Christianity, which being the manifestation of the infinite depths of the Infinite Essence in a personal appearance of the essentially Divine, making atonement for the world in a stupendous deed of self-sacrifice."

And, again:—

“ Whence this tendency of all mere human philosophising? Is such rational, dutiful, loyal to truth, beneficial to man, or filial to God? Is it not the outcome of the spirit of self-assertion, the very essence of selfishness, in direct opposition to the self-sacrifice of God by the self-will of man? ”

When our readers have mastered these singular constructions, and, above all, when they have discerned what is meant by “the self-sacrifice of God *by* the self-will of man,” it will be time to trouble them with further extracts from an author who, though not without some power of thought, seems denied the power of literary expression.

It may be doubted whether *THE INCARNATION OF GOD, AND OTHER SERMONS*, *by the Rev. Henry Batchelor*, is excluded from the benefit of review by the rule just laid down; although it is brought perilously near to exclusion by such a sentence as this :—

“ We are assured,—*and which* lies at the foundation of all else—that God created man in his own image.”

But when questionable taste is added to questionable grammar, as in the following passage, the case grows clearer :—

“ Have you watched over some loved one, when you were convinced that the dreaded end had come? Did the unnameable languor of death appear to have fallen upon the fainting sufferer? Did drops, cold as November rain, *crawl* on breast and brow? ”

It may be inevitable that such sentences as these should occur in sermons “thrown off at the end of the week, in the midst of the toils of a laborious pastorate and an exacting public life.” And it may be equally inevitable that sermons so composed should shew few signs of thought and care except in the mere outlines. But, if such sermons must be preached, it does not follow that they should be printed: and to us it seems high time that at least the *publication* of such sermons as these were seriously discouraged.

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## GOD IN NATURE AND IN HISTORY.

### II. ON THE APPREHENSION OF GOD IN HISTORY.

WE shall now turn to Psalms of a different class, with the view of still further illustrating our principles. Hitherto we have dealt with Nature, we now pass to History. And, to bridge over the transition from nature to history, we may take the subject of Providence as lying between them. The last section of Psalm lxxv. will suffice us as a specimen of this class of Scriptures. "*Thou hast visited the earth, and made it overflow, thou greatly enrichest it with the brook of God (i.e., the rain), full of water : thou preparest their corn, for so thou preparest it (the earth), drenching her furrows, settling her ridges ; with showers thou softenest her, her springing thou dost bless. Thou hast crowned a year of thy goodness (proleptical, for "thou hast crowned this year as a year of thy goodness"), and thy foot-prints drop down fatness. The pastures of the steppes drop therewith, and the hills gird themselves with gladness. The meadows are clothed with sheep, and the valleys enwrap themselves with corn : men shout for joy, yea, they sing.*" Here we have the bounties of a plentiful rain, followed by an abundant harvest, thankfully acknowledged. God is recognized as the giver of both : the rain is "the brook of God" ; the plentiful harvest is a "year of God's goodness." The rain and its results form a theophany ; God is apprehended in them. Now what thought had the Writer in his mind when he connected the rain and the abundant crops with God ? Was the connection a material one, or a religious one ? Can it be the Psalmist's intention to tell us the physical

cause of the good harvest, by way of satisfying our curiosity? And did he mean to represent the fruitfulness of the year as owing to an unusual activity on God's part, as if "God's goodness" were a new cause introduced into the chain of facts determining scarcity or abundance? If so, then a year of scarcity would be one in which God had become inactive, or less active, had forgotten to do his part; and that cannot be meant. If the fruitfulness of one year is owing to God's interference with the chain of physical causation (*i.e.* to say, to an interruption of his ordinary and constant Providential work), and if this be his "goodness," or kindness, then the badness of another year would be owing to God's want of goodness, would be due to God's unkindness. But surely God's kindness is unchangeable; no one can fancy that it could fluctuate in this way. Further, there is here, as elsewhere, the difficulty that if the Psalmist wanted merely to know the physical cause of the rain, we cannot think why he should ascribe it to God, rather than to the clouds, or the wind, or numberless other celestial agencies. He did not inductively eliminate these, and leave God alone remaining, according to modern scientific methods. Do we not escape these difficulties by here accepting the same explanation as before; that the apprehension of God, in Providence as in Nature, is not owing to anything peculiar in the physical causation of things; that the connection of God with nature apprehended by these Psalmists is not a material one at all; that when a Psalmist ascribes the harvest to God's goodness, he does not mean to make a scientific affirmation as to the cause, but is speaking in a different region altogether, is giving a religious interpretation of the facts, is expressing a perception of the spirit, not of the reason? Is not the simple fact enough, that these bounteous gifts of rain and a fruitful season bring God home to his heart, awaken in him thoughts of God?

This much, at any rate, is clear, that it is not a miraculous interposition of God that the Psalm relates. It is simply God's ordinary providential carefulness which is praised. And from this we must accept the deduction that, in order to an apprehension of God, there needs not anything extraordinary in the physical causation of events. A theophany *may* be an unmiraculous event. And if we go this length, we can hardly refuse the further step, hardly refuse to admit that the distinguishing characteristic of the theophany is simply an inward experience of God in a godly man. No doubt the event will always have something uncommon or wonderful about it; otherwise no experience of God would be occasioned. Mere everyday commonplaces awaken no emotion whatever: this harvest was unusually bounteous. But the extraordinary is enough; it does not need to be miraculous.

Passing now to History proper, or the vicissitudes of individual and national life, we may, first of all, take Psalm vi. as the type of a class. Here we have the complaint of one who is in distress through the wickedness of enemies (Verses 7, 8, 10). At first he uses the phraseology of sickness in describing his state (Verses 2, 6, 7), and this has led many commentators to think that the occasion of the Psalm was actually a severe illness. But the sickness is only the result of the persecution of his enemies; or, perhaps even, it is nothing more than a poetic and figurative way of expressing the troublesomeness and the danger of their persecution. The Writer is face to face with death (Verse 5); he is on the verge of despair; but God then relieves him (Verses 8-10), in answer to his prayer.

Now what we have to call attention to is, that the Psalmist regards this state of things as a manifestation of God's "wrath" and "displeasure" (Verse 1): "*O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, nor chasten me in thy hot*



*displeasure.*" His trouble is to him a theophany, a revelation of God; only it is a revelation of God in anger. But if God's connection with the Psalmist's distress is a physical one, if God is in any sense the physical origin of this persecution, we have two causes assigned to one event: (1) Human enemies; and (2) God's displeasure. And yet the Writer evidently does not intend these two to share the responsibility together; and hence they cannot be thought of by him as both causes in the same way, and to the same effect. He recognizes that all the moral blame of his sufferings falls on his enemies; they are "workers of iniquity"; their enmity is *their sin*, and God takes no share in that responsibility. If these two causes, therefore, are not to clash, if we are not to accuse the Psalmist of the uttermost confusion of thought, their causation must belong to different spheres. The human responsibility is entirely borne by the enemies, *i.e.* to say, in the scientific sphere, they alone are the causes of this trouble. But, besides this, there is the entirely independent sphere of the religious interpretation and use of calamity; and there the cause of the trouble is God, for the Psalmist recognizes a Divine purpose in his affliction. It is from God, because God speaks to him in it, because his heart is religiously moved by affliction.<sup>1</sup>

A parallel from the historical books, which will prove that this double view of events was really a current thought in Israel, is found in David's words regarding Shimei's cursing (2 Sam. xvi. 10), when Abishai asks leave to put the reviler to death, the king replies: "*So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David . . . let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him.*" Here the natural interpretation is so plainly false, that it will be rejected by every one. God cannot have commanded Shimei to commit this sin. But was David's conception of God, perhaps, so rude and undeveloped that he was capable

<sup>1</sup> See Ps. xxxviii. for circumstances exactly similar.

of ascribing such a command to God? Did David mean to insinuate that Shimei was not so very much to blame in the matter, because a higher power was moving him to do this wrong? By no means. In his dying speech (1 Kings ii. 8, the passage is by the same writer as 2 Sam. xvi., see Wellhausen's "Bleek's Einleitung," 4th ed., §§ 112-118), David charges his son with the execution of due punishment on Shimei for his crime. He quite recognizes that, in the sphere of phenomenal causation, the act was wholly Shimei's, and wholly criminal. Yet also the act was God's, and David refuses to allow Abishai to put an immediate end to the affliction, because he recognizes a religious use in it. He sees that God is speaking to him through the infliction. There is a lesson of humbling for him in it, and David will not spare himself the learning it. Again we are compelled to distinguish two spheres: the human and phenomenal region, that which science has to do with, in which the whole cause is Shimei's evil passions; and the divine or religious sphere, the religious use of all that happens in reminding the soul of God, and awakening the varied forms of religious emotion in the spirit.

On this same principle—of religious use not of physical causation—are to be interpreted all the passages in the Old Testament that seem to ascribe to God unrighteous or ungenerous actions, as in this case of Shimei. And such passages are somewhat numerous. One of the clearest is Ezekiel xx. 25, 26: "*Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live; and I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through the fire all that first opened the womb, that I might make them desolate.*" Here the introduction of Moloch-worship is attributed to Jehovah; but, of course, not to the effect that He desired such worship, and therefore moved men to commence it. The Prophet only sees a religious use, or meaning, in the introduction of such

heathen worship, viz., perhaps, a means of testing the reality of Israel's professed religion. So with God's tempting David to number the people (2 Sam. xxiv. 1); "the evil spirit from the Lord" that troubled Saul (1 Sam. xvi. 14-23), tempting him to commit murder (Chapter xviii. 10, 11); the lying spirit that went forth at the Lord's behest to entice Ahab to his ruin (1 Kings xxii. 20-23), by inspiring his prophets with falsehood; the Lord's "stirring up adversaries to Solomon," *i.e.*, urging men to rebellion against their lawful king; the Lord's hardening of Pharaoh's heart (Exod. ix. 12; x. 1, 20, 27; xi. 10; xiv. 4, 8).<sup>1</sup> See also Isaiah lxiii. 17: "*O Lord, why dost thou make us to err from thy ways, and harden our hearts from thy fear?*" Isaiah xxix. 10: "*For the Lord hath poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes, and your rulers hath He covered;*" Isaiah vi. 9, 10: "*Make the heart of this people fat,*" etc; also Psalm lxxxi. 12: "*So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust; and they walked in their own counsels;*" Psalm cv. 25: "*He turned their (the Egyptians') heart to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants.*" It may not always be easy to say what is the precise religious use or interpretation that is in the Writer's mind when he refers each of these various actions to God; but it is quite clear, on the face of it, that the Writers cannot have meant to charge God with being the cause of these acts, in the modern sense of "cause," else they must also have thrown the blame of them on God, and that they never do. The contemplation of these events awoke in them the thought of God, awoke religious emotions and feelings in them; that, and that alone, is what they meant to express when they said, These are God's doings. When

<sup>1</sup> In this latter case we have positive proof of the existence of two ways of looking at the one fact, for elsewhere (Exod. viii. 15, 32) Pharaoh hardens his own heart. The phenomenal cause was Pharaoh himself; the ascription of the same phenomena to God also shews that the Hebrews could see a religious use and meaning, for them and for Pharaoh, in the event.

after the loss of all that he had, Job submissively cried : *"The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord ;"* was he thinking only of the *"fire of God"* that *"fell from heaven and burnt up the sheep and the servants,"* and *"the wind from the wilderness that smote the four corners of the house upon the young men that they died?"* Was it only in these that he saw the Lord's taking away? Or, if he included therein the whole of his calamities, did he mean to say that the Chaldeans and the Sabeans were not wholly criminal in what they did because there was a higher power urging them to it, and so taking part of the blame? Was it anything better than mere love of rapine and avaricious greed which moved these robbers to this raid? Of course not. Yet the action of the Chaldeans and Sabeans, which was guilt in them, was recognized by Job as an act of God, with reference to which his only duty was submission. In short, he sees that in these losses there were lessons from God to him; he at once resigns himself to the religious use of the calamity. The bad news stirs in his mind emotions that are connected with God's presence—awe, reverence, submission; he is at once thrown into a religious state, that is to say, the Lord is in the calamity.

We may next take an example from the history of nations. Psalm lxxix. is a lament and prayer in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. A picture is given of the desolation of the Temple and the city (Verse 1), of the slaughter of the inhabitants (Verses 2, 3), and the malicious glee of the enemies of Judah (Verse 4). Verse 5 then ascribes all this to the anger of God at Israel's sins; *"How long, Lord? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire?"* The instruments of this wrath, as all will admit, were Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans; and these were, also admittedly, quite

free in their actions, and had no idea that a Divine Power was working through them. This attribution of national calamity to the wrath of God is universal throughout all stages of Israelite history. It is useless to begin quoting instances: every Chapter almost in the Prophets would have to be cited. Undoubtedly, then, God was apprehended as active in all such calamities; and what we have to find out is wherein this apprehension of God consisted. If we are to suppose that the Prophets and Psalmists thought that Jehovah, in some way, worked out his will through the free activity of Nebuchadnezzar, still the question remains, and it is the only question which has the slightest interest for the theory of Revelation: What made them think that Jehovah had any hand in the matter at all? It was no perception of sense which apprehended his presence. Phenomenally, the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans was as much a natural event as the destruction of Rome by the Gauls. If the Psalmists and Prophets only cared about the cause of these calamities, they would have thrown themselves into utter confusion by finding two equally complete causes, a human and a Divine one. The state of mind in which their national calamities appeared as theophanies can only be understood when we break away from the conception of physical causation in interpreting their words. The hearts of the worshippers of Jehovah apprehended God in their visitation, because it awoke religious emotions and experiences in them. Thus, again, we are led to the conclusion that, in their minds, God's connection with their calamities was not one belonging to the sphere of physical causation, but rather to the sphere of religious use. If any one should pretend to have proved that the events leading up to the capture of Jerusalem were all perfectly natural and predictable from ordinary causes, he would not thereby have eliminated God from history; for that is not the fashion



in which God is in history. The discovery of "God in History," as of "God in Nature," is not one that science can help or hinder: it is a perception of the religious nature, the spirit, and not of the reason.

It is needless to multiply instances further. The same lines of reasoning might be applied to all the cases of the apprehension of God in history, *e.g.*, to Psalms like the Eighteenth, where David praises God for having redeemed him in numerous instances all through his lifetime; or to Psalms cv., cvi., etc., which narrate the ancient Israelite history so as to call attention to God's hand in it. The same explanation must be given in all these cases, at least for all non-miraculous events in which God is seen. The presence of God in history was not due to anything peculiar in the physical causation of the events. God was in any event the contemplation of which aroused religious emotions in men. God was seen, no doubt, in miraculous events also; but it was not the miraculous character of the events that constituted his connection with them. This result, it may be observed, tallies exactly with that already obtained from the consideration of "God in Nature." Religious communion, experienced by godly men, is seen to be the source—that is, the invariably antecedent state in *man's* mind, we are dealing only with that—of all affirmations made in these Psalms about God's presence in Nature or in History. That seems to lead us towards the general proposition, which we do not pretend to do more than point towards, that communion with God, or religious experience, is the correlative in man of what is revelation, or self-manifesting activity, in God; hence that, humanly speaking, religious experience is the source of all new truth in regard to religion. Accordingly, if we would know more about the process of Revelation, we must analyse religious experience further. And when we reflect that the Holy

Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is the representative of religious communion (2 Cor. xiii. 14), there seems opened to us a vista towards some better appreciation of the fact that the Holy Spirit is the Source of all Revelation, inspiring the Prophets of the Old Testament (2 Pet. i. 21; 1 Pet. i. 11), and "guiding into all truth" the disciples and followers of Christ under the New (St. John xvi. 13; see xiv. 17, 26).

We may, in a single word, answer an objection which may be taken to the view above indicated. The cry of irreligious naturalism has been usually raised hitherto against attempts to do justice to the indications we have been dealing with; and it has been argued that, in this way, all the religious worth and meaning is taken out of Scripture, and especially out of the history of Israel. It seems to us that the very reverse is the case; that it is the ordinary interpretation which is the naturalism, because it turns the impassioned language of religious communion into mere cold propositions of the scientific sphere to which they do not belong, and thus involves itself in conflicts with science. Surely the "naturalism" lies in denying the independence of the religious sphere, and allowing that the scientific sphere is all, so that, unless room can be found there for God, there is no room anywhere for Him. The religious meaning of the whole of Nature and of the whole of History, the universal reign of Jehovah, is exactly what we have been trying to vindicate. This religious meaning is freed from uncertainty, by being taken out of the region of logic into that of immediate spiritual perception. The evidence of God's presence in Nature and in History we consider to depend not on reasoning, but on immediate intuition of the spirit; and the trustworthiness of all ultimate data of our perceptive faculties must always be a

postulate which is above criticism. That we do habitually, though it may be unconsciously, distinguish the religious sphere or the religious interpretation of phenomena from the scientific, an illustration from ordinary life will show. We have seen men and women disabled for life, say by the carelessness of a nurse, who has let them drop from her arms while infants. Or we have seen men reduced to penury by the downfall of some commercial fabric in which they were interested, a downfall wholly attributable to the guilt of speculators, and for which the law holds these speculators responsible, and punishes them. In both cases the sufferers, if godly men, submissively recognize that God has afflicted them, and think it their duty not to murmur, but to triumph over calamity by faith, and render it only a means of increasing their nearness to God. This they do as much in the cases quoted, where men are to blame, as when limbs are injured or property is lost in a gale at sea, or by the "fire of God." When, therefore, such men ascribe their calamity to God, and bear it patiently and cheerfully on that account, must Science describe their words as purely anti-scientific mythology? Or, on the other hand, when they acknowledge that their so ascribing their misfortunes to God, is only the religious use of calamity, and that the *cause* was wholly the carelessness or wickedness of their fellow-men, must Theology cry out that this is ungodly naturalism? Are not both interpretations equally legitimate? There is, of course, no doubt that science is right in saying that it can find no cause save human carelessness and wickedness; but is it not also unquestionable that the right attitude for a finite spirit to take up towards unavoidable affliction is to receive it from God's hand with patience and meekness, and to conquer it by the power of the religious life. This, then, is exactly how we understand similar statements in the Bible; and we hold that the analogy between the two cases is sufficient

to preclude the objection of "naturalism." Our interpretation of the words of the Bible must then be left to stand or fall according to the verdict of exegetical science.

P. THOMSON.

## THE PLACE AND FUNCTION OF THE LAMP.

### I. THE PARABLE (*concluded*).

#### ST. LUKE xi. 33.

THIS charming parable occurs in three other passages in the Synoptic Gospels (St. Mark iv. 21; St. Luke viii. 16; and St. Matthew v. 15), and was uttered by our Lord in at least two wholly different connections of thought. Of these other uses of the Parable I gave an exposition in the last number of this Magazine. But here St. Luke gives us another repetition of it, and links it on to a passage so philosophical and profound that we must not expect to fathom half its depth of meaning and suggestion. In his version of it it runs: "*No man, when he hath lighted a lamp, putteth it into a cellar, or under a bushel, but on the lamp-stand, that they who come in may see the light.*" And the Verses which follow it, literally rendered, run thus: "*Thine eye is the lamp of the body. When thine eye is single, thy whole body is illuminated; but when it is evil, thy body also is endarkened. Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness. For if thy whole body be illuminated, having no part dark, the whole shall be illuminated as when the bright shining of the lamp irradiates thee.*"

Now no one can read these words without feeling how difficult they are, without being conscious of a meaning in them which it is hard to grasp and define. There is a touch of mysticism in them. Though they are found in the Gospel of St. Luke, and, substantially, in the Gospel of

St. Matthew also (Chap. vi. 22, 23), they sound like an extract from the Gospel of St. John. We feel that there is a deep meaning in them even before we attach any definite conception to them. And there *is* a deep meaning in them, which we must try to reach; they are full of "sundry and manifold" instruction.

If we look back to the preceding context (Verses 29-32), we find that our Lord had been reproaching the Jews of his day as "an evil and adulterous generation," because, though they had a perpetual witness for God in their own hearts, they did not listen to it; and though, *in Him*, they had the greatest of all proofs that God was with them, they did not recognize the manifestation of God in Him, but were greedy for mere wonders, for the mere signs of an omnipotent and irresistible Power. They were "evil," because it is only evil which obliterates or obscures the true and perpetual sign, the sign in the Conscience; and they were "adulterous," because there is a certain impurity in the appeal of a heart which does not really want to see God and to share in his holiness for mere proofs of his presence and power. Yet, evil and adulterous as they are, a sign such as they demand *has* been given them; a sign greater than that which convinced the Queen of Sheba that Solomon was taught of God, and greater than that which convinced the men of Nineveh that Jonah was sent to reveal the righteous judgment of God against all unrighteousness in men. One was with them, and had long been with them, who was greater than Solomon, greater than Jonah; wiser than the wisest sage, more righteous than any prophet and preacher of righteousness. The Son of Man was the great Light, or Lamp, of that generation; a Lamp that burned and shone with brighter and more penetrating rays than any of the wise and holy men to whom Jew or Gentile had been drawn. But for the reception of this Light, as of all light, there must be a cor-



responding organ, an eye capable of perceiving it; a single or healthy eye; an open eye that desired the light. Such an organ, such an eye, that evil and adulterous generation had not, and could not have so long as they remained evil. And the proof that they lacked it was, that they were still asking for signs when the supreme Sign stood before them. To ask a sign of Christ was as though a man should go to the sun, shining in meridian splendour, and ask for a lamp to guide his feet through the darkness. Had the Jews possessed a single and open eye, they would have recognized "the light of the world" in Christ Jesus far more easily than the Queen of the South recognized the wisdom of God in the wit of Solomon, or than the Ninevites recognized the voice of God's righteousness in the warning of Jonah. The mere fact that they did not see light in Him who was the Light was a sufficient and damning proof that their eye was evil. Seeing, they saw, and did not perceive; hearing, they heard, and did not understand.

This is one, and a fine, meaning of the passage before us. But still another meaning is suggested or thrown into it by the self-same context: "As Jonah was a sign unto the Ninevites, *so also* shall the Son of man be to this generation." Now Jonah was a sign to the men of Nineveh, not only in that he spoke words to them which found an echo in their hearts, which quickened and roused their conscience, but also in that he told them how he had been for three days buried in the depths of the sea, and yet had been delivered from death that he might bring them God's call to repentance. And here, in like manner, after speaking to his brethren according to the flesh words well adapted to arouse and alarm their conscience, our Lord foretells that He too must be buried and yet rise again from the dead, to bring them to repentance. So familiar is this fact to Him, so clearly does He foresee the future death and resurrection while yet He is in the full vigour of his life

and the full stress of his work, that He can speak of it almost playfully, half hiding and half revealing it in the simple pretty parable of the Lamp. *He* is the Light of the world, the great Lamp of life. Men may, and will, try to hide the Lamp which God has kindled for their guidance and salvation in the "crypt" of death, under the "bushel" of an extinguished life; but God will none the less lift it to the "lampstand," shining on which it will give light both to all who are in the house and to all who may come into it. Yet, even then, when the Lamp is on the stand, when the Sun has risen into the sky, when the Divine Life reappears from and dissipates the night of death, only those will be able to see and to walk in its light whose eyes have been exercised and trained to discern the true Lord and Ruler of men; and the more wisely exercised, the more finely trained their eyes have been, the more will they see in Him, the more fully will they behold and reflect his glory.

So that here we have a second meaning thrown into our Parable by its context; and that meaning nothing less than one of those prophecies of things to come of which Christ uttered so many, though we take so little note of them and often fail to draw from them a confirmation of our faith. For, surely, we might reasonably and fairly argue that, if Christ had a more than mortal insight into the years to be, a fact which no Criticism can ever shake, He who confessedly had more than mortal insight may well have had also a more than mortal power.

So much as this is clear, I apprehend, and there is no difficulty in grasping these general meanings of the passage. It is, I suspect, when we enter into its details that the difficulty begins; when, for example, we read that the lamp of the body is the eye, and the brief dissertation that follows on the states of darkness and of light into which we drift according as the eye is healthy or diseased. And yet even

the meaning of these details is clear enough so soon as we seize the clue. For even if we confine our thoughts to the natural eye, is not the eye the lamp of the whole body? Do not the feet walk by it, and the hands work by it? May not the eye be impaired by disease, or by structural and inherited defects? And if the eye be injured, so that we cannot see, or cannot see clearly, or our power of vision is suddenly and largely reduced, is not the whole body cramped through all forms of its activity, even if it be not reduced to a state of trembling helplessness? May not those who are smitten with blindness well complain, with Milton's Samson, that, for them, "light, the prime work of God," is extinguished, "and all her various objects of delight annulled?" May they not well complain that they, "dark in light," are exposed

"To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,  
Within doors or without, still as a fool  
In power of others, never in their own;"

and even reasonably urge that "light so necessary is to life" as to be "almost life itself"?

On the other hand, may not even the blind be so trained, or so train and carry themselves as that, in the case of Mr. Fawcett, for instance, half the deprivations of blindness are annulled for them, and they can "see," as they call it, almost as well as if they had eyes? Where the bodily vision is impaired or defective, may it not be so cultivated and disciplined as to grow stronger and keener, and even the colour-blind *learn* to distinguish colours? Yes, even the most subtle and unsuspected defects may be discovered, allowed for, repaired. Thus, for example, when a novice is introduced into an astronomical observatory in which he is to be an assistant, it is almost invariably found that he sees a little more quickly, or a little more slowly, than an average observer would see. This little more or little less, this departure from the

standard on either side, is called his "personal equation," and is allowed for in all the calculations which are based on observations made by him. And this personal equation may depend on the structure of his eye or brain, or on his general bodily health, or on his having been used to observe things accurately or not used. It varies from year to year; but, as a rule, it is corrected in proportion as the eye grows healthy through an improvement in his general health, or in proportion as the eye is trained and accustomed to accurate and delicate work.

It would be easy to multiply facts such as these; but even these will go far to explain the sequence of thought in this mystical looking passage.

After referring to Himself as the Light and Life of men, our Lord goes on to say that, for the due apprehension of light, a corresponding and appropriate organism is required. This organ is the eye. The eye, which receives light for the whole body, gives light to the whole body, the light in which all its activities are carried on, and may therefore be called "the lamp" of the body. But the amount of light received and distributed depends on the power and accuracy of the eye that receives it. The organ may be diseased; it may prevent the access of the light, or pervert it, so that we do not see things as they are, or even in extreme cases do not see them at all. If this solitary lamp be put out, how profound must be the darkness in which we walk! If it be obscured or distorted, how radical and misleading must be the errors into which it betrays us! It is of the last importance, therefore, that we should keep the one organ which receives and imparts light, the light of all our seeing, all our working, all our progress, in a healthy condition. It is of the gravest moment that we should seek to remedy and correct every defect in it; that we should raise it to its highest power, and train it to the most accurate and delicate discriminations. No lamp is

kindled that it may be hid, hid wholly, as in "a cellar" beneath the room we occupy, or hid partially, as under "a couch" in the room; and least of all "the lamp of the body," which alone makes all other light visible to us and useful.

*That* is quite plain and clear, I think; but, of course, in all this we have been dealing only with the *form* of the passage, only with its outside of parable. For, while speaking of the eye of the body, it is obvious that it was the eye of the soul which our Lord had in view. The spiritual part in us has its perceptive faculty as well as the physical part; and it is even more important that the spiritual lamp should be lifted to its due place, and kept burning brightly, than that the physical lamp should be placed on the lamp-stand, and not hid in a crypt or under a bushel.

If, then, we turn from the form of the passage to its *substance*, what is it that our Lord is teaching us in these words? I take Him to teach that a healthy, trained, unprejudiced understanding is required for the due apprehension and appreciation of spiritual or religious truth; and that the health and power of the understanding, by which we both receive and impart the truth, depends mainly on the due placing and balance of the affections by which we are animated and impelled. Nay, more, I take Him to mean that, in proportion as this inward perception and love of the truth grows pure and strong within us, our whole outward life will reflect and betray the power of that truth; that as the inward light waxes clear and pure, it will penetrate and irradiate all our external actions, till it shines through and transfigures the whole man.

Remember, it is of the capacity for interpreting the signs of a Divine presence and activity that Christ is speaking. He Himself, He says, is the greatest of all signs that God is with men. If the Jews had not been wholly blind—blinder than the Gentiles who "came from the uttermost parts of



the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon," or who listened and "repented at the preaching of Jonah," they *must* have recognized the presence, the wisdom, and the righteousness of God in Him. That they did not recognize it was a sufficient and damning proof that their faculty of spiritual perception, their power to receive and radiate the light of truth, was corrupted, distorted, diseased.

Whence, then, did the disease which impaired, or even annulled, their power of true intellectual perception spring? It sprang, as we may infer from St. Matthew's report of this passage (Chap. vi. Verses 22, 23), from the evil and perverted affections of their heart. For St. Matthew reports Christ as teaching men that "where their treasure is there *their heart* will be also;" and, then, as going on to say: "*and the lamp of the body is the eye; if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.*" And from the connection in which the words stand, it is clear He means to suggest that the eye of the soul is affected by the condition of the heart; that our affections limit and determine our perceptions; that men fail to see what they do not want to see, and are able to see what they care to see, what they are looking for because they love it.

Even as a general truth this thought is confirmed by our common experience; for we all know that men are slow to see what they are reluctant to see; that they may even blind themselves, at least for a time, to truths which condemn courses of action on which they are strongly bent. But it is the special application of this general truth which Christ had in view that we must bear in mind. And this special application was that, *when God is revealing Himself to men*, whether in the wisdom of the wise or the reproofs of the holy, or even in the perfect wisdom and unblemished holiness of the Son of Man, this power of receiving and reflecting the light of that revelation depends mainly on

their willingness to receive it, on their freedom from the passions and affections which prejudice the mind against the truth of God, which lead them to hate and resent the light that condemns them.

Now is not *that* true—true to our experience, true to the experience of every man and every day? If we take the noblest forms of spiritual truth to men who are plunged in a sensual sloth, or the clearest manifestation of an eternal reality to men who are living only for the things of time, or the most perfect and charming exhibition of righteousness to men devoted to aims which can only be reached unrighteously, or a life through which there shines a love stronger than death to men to whom their own private and selfish ends are of paramount interest and importance, can *they* recognize and respond to the beauty, to the truth and the irresistible attractiveness of the truth, to the righteousness, the life, the love we place before them? Will they see *God* in it, or a manifestation of the supreme good, a disclosure of the true ideal and the true aims of human life? Will they not, rather, blink before the momentary irradiation, close their eyes to it, return to the dark and tortuous paths in which we found them walking, and perhaps even turn again and rend us for having disturbed them in their sordid pursuits even for an instant? Cannot even *good* men close their eyes to the facts and discoveries of science, if they do not want to see them, if they fear that to receive them would be to disturb the accepted and comfortable beliefs in which they have been cradled? Cannot even men of science close their eyes to the evidences of a moral and immortal spirit in man, or to the signs which indicate the presence and activity of God, whether in Nature or in History, if they are bent on reducing all the phenomena of the universe under their own materialistic conceptions of order and law? “The eye sees only what it brings in itself the power to see;” and its

power of seeing depends on the aims men cherish, on the bents they have taken.

Almost every sensitive and thoughtful man, even though he have no formulated religion, is conscious, at the lowest, of a Presence that besets him behind and before, which he cannot evade, whether his thoughts and aims soar to heaven or sink to hell; a Power, a Spirit, behind Nature, behind his own consciousness even, which is ever giving new meaning and scope to his thoughts, new direction to his aims, new depth to his hopes, new terror to his sins. We are all haunted, at times, by that sense of an unseen but all-encompassing Presence which the ancient Psalmist of Israel has so pathetically rendered for us (Psalm cxxxix.). And yet we are all conscious also that at times this Power retires from us, so to speak, leaves us to choose our own course and take our own way, and watches to see what we will do when we are thus left free, when the Divine hand is lifted from us. And who does not know that at such times—yes, and at all times—we may disregard that Presence, harden ourselves against that all-encompassing Power, close our eyes against a light too great and pure and piercing for our weak sin-burdened hearts, until we become blind to it, or plunge into open rebellion against it?

Now this constant and natural revelation of God both takes many forms and is supplemented in many ways. In how many ways, indeed, is God ever seeking to disclose Himself unto us, to come into vital and quickening contact with some part of our manifold nature! It is not merely that He wants us to know Him and believe some facts or truths about Him; He wants that we should know *Him*, wants to give *Himself* to us, and not mere notions and beliefs about Himself. By the slow and gradual processes of his providence, by the discipline of sorrow and of joy, by the experience and examples of our immediate neighbours, by inspirations addressed to the seeking intellect of

the philosopher, to the yearning imagination of the poet, to the common reason and conscience of all men; by the biographies He has moved holy men to indite, by writing out the history of one nation in full with a constant eye to its relation to truth and righteousness; and, above all, by the incarnation of all truth and righteousness and love in the perfect life of the Perfect Man, He has endeavoured to penetrate the mists that dim our vision of Him, to draw the veil and to purge away the disease which impairs or obstructs our view of Him.

In all these ways, and in many more, God is *seeking* us, seeking to shew and to impart Himself to us. There is no lack of light. From a thousand different centres the primal and eternal Light is shining all around us. What we lack, if as yet we do not see God, is not light to see Him by, but an eye to see Him with. And if the eye is blind, so that it cannot see Him, or distorted and diseased, so that we do not see Him as He is, *that* is because our hearts are preoccupied, and so preoccupied with other affections and pursuits that we do not care to see Him, will not be at the trouble to lift our eyes to heaven and open them on the light. Many a man sings—

“Teach me my God and King,  
In all things Thee to see;  
And what I do in anything,  
To do it as for Thee;”

who would, nevertheless, be more than a little startled were he to see God by his own fireside, or in his own office or factory, where nevertheless God as surely *is*, and is revealing Himself, as in any temple or church; and might be not a little disgusted even were he compelled to do *as for God* what he does in the shop or amid the excitements of a contested election!

And here, as every man's own heart will begin to rebuke him, I need add no more except only this: That it is by our

defective vision of God's universal presence and activity that we fall short of our proper and highest blessedness. There is a wonderful splendour in the words with which our Lord closes this remarkable passage. He would have us use and train the eye of the soul, keep the lamp always on the stand, because, in proportion as we cherish this inward light, "all things will become full of light" for us, and we ourselves shall be transfigured by the power of the light shining from within outwards; because our whole nature will thus become transparent to and irradiated with a heavenly glory. For it is, He says, as we kindle and tend this lamp of the soul that our whole nature grows clear, pure, transparent, till at last we stand full in "the bright shining" of the sun, the very lamp of heaven. And what is all this but saying in a more nobly poetic way that we are to let our inward light prove and approve itself by our "good works" (St. Matt. v. 16), that men, seeing our good deeds, may glorify our Father who is in heaven by a life as bright and good as our own?

Let us, then, open our eyes to the light, *i.e.*, open our hearts to the God who is always seeking us and disclosing Himself to us; let us suffer the sacred influence we receive from Him to radiate, to shine forth on our fellows through the good deeds of a life at one with his will; and in the end we shall become radiant with God, transparent to God; his rays will shine clean through us, through every part of our nature; we shall not only see Him, but share in the full splendour of his everlasting glory.

S. Cox.

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## THE HISTORICAL CHRIST OF ST. PAUL.

### I. THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS (*Concluded*).

ROMANS xiii. 7, 10, 14.—Let us repeat the principle which we have laid down in the previous Section. We must always regard the moral teaching of St. Paul as in his own view a distinctively *Christian* morality. He never gives it to the world as something elaborated out of his own natural consciousness, but always as something imparted to him through a mysterious spiritual contact with the mind of Christ. In the Chapter before us there are presented to our view three very striking moral principles which, from a consideration of the Pauline method, we must hold that the Apostle believed to be points of Christian morality. When we turn to our present Gospels we find that each of these has been identically reproduced. The matter may appear trifling, but the elements of every life portraiture are trifles in their isolation.

Verse 7 runs thus: "Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour." The idea is one to which we have been familiarized by eighteen Christian centuries, but one to which we are convinced no Christian Apostle would have ventured to give utterance on his own responsibility. It means that a subject of that Kingdom which is to swallow up all other kingdoms may yet, in secular departments, acknowledge the sovereignty of earthly rulers. In the Gospel we attribute to St. Matthew, the Founder of Christianity is represented as sanctioning tribute, by the words: "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's;" and if St. Paul had not that command before him, he must have had one analogous to it.

Verse 10 contains these words: "Love is the fulfilling of the law." We have already seen, in a previous Section,

that the historical Christ had, according to St. Paul, fulfilled the law by spiritualizing it. The Apostle now declares that it is spiritualized through love. The idea is not so much that love is an impulse, as that love is a germ; it is the germ-cell out of which are evolved all the requirements of duty, and all the commandments of law; and which contains already within itself the embryo of a pure life. In St. Matthew xxii. 37-40 we have an exact reproduction of this morality. The Founder of Christianity is represented as having been asked which was the great commandment of the law; and is said to have returned the answer: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Verse 14 runs thus: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." "Provision" literally means a seeing in advance. Alike in Greek and in English, the form of expression is a warning against an anxious forethought for things not worthy of such anxiety. It is an admonition not to allow the material cares of to-morrow to intrude themselves upon the work of to-day. It is pointed out that material things should not be objects of anxiety for the mere selfish pleasures they can bring: "To fulfil *the lusts* thereof." It is suggested that, in order to avoid such desires, the mind must be preoccupied by a higher aim: "*Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.*" One hears in these utterances the ring of that precept which has become familiar to the ear of Christendom: "Take no thought for the morrow; take no thought what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed: seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." In this passage of our recognized Gospel the kingdom of God, which is the kingdom of the Messiah, is said to consist in the antithesis to

that frame of mind which makes eating and drinking and clothing the end of human life. Is this the same Messianic kingdom which Paul claimed for *his* Christ? Is it a subjective growth of the second century, or is it an actual picture of the Christian Founder's teaching as it has been handed down from the Apostolic age? The answer to that question will be found in the next Section.

*Romans* xiv. 17.—“For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” These words, to modern ears, sound like a truism; to the age of St. Paul they were very original and somewhat paradoxical. The general tendency alike of Jew and Gentile was to look for a kingdom of God whose essence should be its eating and drinking; in other words, its possession of what are called the good things of life. The kingdom which Paul here foreshadows is a kingdom which would not naturally have been suggested to his mind either by his Jewish education or by his Gentile surroundings. It is a kingdom whose distinguishing characteristic is its inwardness as opposed to prevailing outwardness; it cometh not with observation. The historical reign of the Messiah (for that is the true significance of the phrase “kingdom of God,”) is here represented as a reign which does not directly influence the animal and the physical, but influences them only through its empire over the spiritual life, through “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Here, in this Gospel of Paul, we have the direct statement of a connection between the historical reign of the Messiah and the outpouring of that mysterious influence known as the Holy Spirit; he views it as a gift from the Christian Founder. When we look through this Gospel of Paul we are struck with the powers he attributes to this Spirit; and when we turn to our later, and, by supposition, our mythical Gospels, we are still more struck by the

similarity which the powers these attribute to the Spirit bear to those assigned by Paul. We think it will be found that St. Paul attributes to the Holy Ghost five distinct influences. Its first and foremost power is, with him, that of revelation—the gift of prophesying. The “natural man,” he says, “receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them; but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor. ii. 14, 10). Is this a different or the same power with that which the fourth Gospel marks in these words: “Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; he shall guide you into all truth, he shall teach you all things?” Flowing out of this power comes a second, the power of verbal expression, or gift of tongues: “The things which we speak, we speak not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth” (1 Cor. ii. 13). Is this a different or the same power with that which is indicated in the words of St. Luke xii. 11, 12: “And when they bring you unto the synagogues and unto magistrates and unto powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say; for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say?” Next, is the power of pleading or advocacy: “The Spirit helpeth our infirmity; the Spirit maketh intercession for us with unutterable sighings” (Rom. viii. 26); does not the writer of the fourth Gospel expressly call the Spirit the Advocate? There follows the power to impart comfort: in the passage before us peace and joy are associated with the Spirit; is this the same kind of peace and joy which the fourth Gospel promises as the fruit of the Comforter’s mission? Lastly, as the result of the whole, there is ascribed to the Spirit a power to influence the moral life: “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh” (Gal. v. 16):

“That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit (Rom. viii. 4): is this another power from that which in the language of our Johannine Gospel was to “convince the world of sin, and righteousness, and judgment?”

*Romans* xv. 3, 5, 18, 19. There are four distinct points brought before us in these Verses: the self-denial of the historical Christ; the tendency of his spirit and teaching to promote unanimity; the command which He gave to evangelize the world; and the relation of his person to the great subject of miracles. The main interest, from an apologetic point of view, lies in the last of these; and therefore the first three may be briefly stated.

(1) “For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.” St. Paul here states, as an historical fact, that the life of the Christian Founder was one of self-denial. It may be said, if he is referring to real history, why does he appeal to prophecy? why does he quote Psalm lxi. if he had the actual monuments of the life before him? He does so just *because* he had the actual monuments of the life before him, and because these monuments seemed, on a first view, to contradict prophecy: they revealed a suffering, instead of a conquering, Messiah. St. Paul could not resist the evidence of the monuments; but he wanted to shew that their evidence was not altogether foreign to the old Jewish conception, that some such Christ had actually been prefigured in the Jewish Scriptures, and that, side by side with the conquering element, there had all along been attributed to the Messianic Deliverer an element of pain and weakness. The Gentile proclivities of Paul would not naturally have led him to read Christianity into Judaism; it was his sense of the new principle in Christianity which made him desire as much as possible to find such a bridge between the two re-



ligions as would prevent a total rupture between the Jewish and the Gentile converts.

(2) "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus." The phrase *according to Christ Jesus* marks, as we think, a clear reference to the Christ of history. If it had been simply "according to Christ," it would not necessarily have implied such a reference; Christ was simply the official name which was to be given to the Jewish Deliverer, whenever He should come, and whoever He might be. To recommend unity of spirit "according to Christ" might mean no more than to recommend unity of spirit as a fitting preparation for that reign of peace which the Messiah was to usher in. But when the historical name of *Jesus* is coupled with the official designation *Christ*, it is clearly implied that the exhortation to unanimity is based upon the spirit and teaching of the actual Christ of history; and from this it immediately follows that the historical Christ whom Paul worshipped was one who could have uttered the familiar words: "Agree with your adversary quickly; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." (St. Matt. v. 24, 25.)

(3) Passing now to the last clause of Verse 19, we find these words: "So that from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum, I have fulfilled the gospel of Christ." The word "fulfilled," which is the literal translation of what we render "fully preached," is highly suggestive. It implies that, in making his missionary circuit, the Apostle believed himself to be fulfilling a command of the Christian Founder to propagate his religion; or, as St. Paul himself puts it, "To make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed." We involuntarily compare the concluding passage of St. Matthew: "Go and disciple all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." In executing the command St. Paul declares that he had been successful;

but the point for us to observe is the reason he assigns for his success. It is a point which ushers us at once into the last apologetic question suggested by this Epistle, and in one sense the most important question with which the Christian apologist can be anywhere engaged. We shall try to treat it with calmness and impartiality.

(4) Verse 18, and the first clause of Verse 19, runs thus : " For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed, through the might of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God." St. Paul virtually says this : " If I liked, it would be quite legitimate for me, and quite possible for me, to quote many testimonies to the supernatural power of the Gospel ; but, for the sake of direct evidence, I am constrained to confine myself to those supernatural occurrences in the production of which I have myself been the direct agent." This is very bold language, and would seem to bring the apologetic question very near to a crisis. Yet it will be found that there are really two questions at issue, which we shall have to consider separately. The first is, does St. Paul, in the passage before us, claim the power of working what we now call miracles ? the second is, if we shall find that he does claim such a power, what bearing has this upon the supernatural character of the Christ of history ?

We shall put the first question in this form : Does St. Paul profess to work miracles in that sense in which the word is understood in our present Gospels ? The author of " Supernatural Religion " says, No ; he says that the miracles of Paul are mental changes, new thoughts, inward ecstatic experiences. We agree so far with the author of " Supernatural Religion," that all the miracles of St. Paul are conceived by the Apostle as having their root and their origin in mental changes ; but we would call attention to the fact that this is the very point in which the miracles of

our Gospels are distinguished from the miracles of all other religions. The Gospels make no distinction, in point of supernatural power, between a counteraction of natural law and a counteraction of moral law: "Whether is it easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk"? but they make a great distinction between them in point of chronological sequence. They assert, not once, nor twice, but persistently and unvariedly, that the counteraction of the moral law must precede the power to counteract the natural one: "Why could not we cast him out?" ask the disciples concerning the possessing spirit; "Because of unbelief" is the immediate answer. In order to be healed a man is required to have faith: "If thou believest, all things are possible to him that believeth": and on one occasion the Evangelist is not afraid to say of the Son of Man: "He could not do many mighty works among them, because of their unbelief." St. Paul's Epistles simply prove that this view of our Gospels is not mythical, that it belongs also to the primitive Christian age. We see there that, in the view of the Apostle, all wonders are conceived as having their beginning in the innermost parts of the soul, as taking their rise from changes in the subjective consciousness, as emanating from powers implanted by a new and a vivifying life. The Gospel is said to be "the power of God to every one that believeth": and, in the passage immediately before us, the "mighty signs and wonders" are referred directly to a spiritual source—"the power of the Spirit of God."

The miracles of the Son of Man, as they appear in our Gospels, are the eruptions of a hidden supernatural Life: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus, and *manifested forth his glory*;" "as he *prayed* the fashion of his countenance was altered." When the miracle is a work wrought upon another human soul, its initiating process is the production in that soul of the same hidden life which was the germ of the work in the spirit of the Master. The wonders of

our Gospel, therefore, are, in the first instance, inward wonders. But observe, as long as they are inward wonders, they are not and cannot be signs. A sign is a manifestation. In every New Testament passage in which the word is used, it signifies an external symbol intended to prove the existence of a power more inward than itself. The essence of a sign is its outwardness; it may be miraculous or not according as that which it is designed to prove is conceived to be a natural or a supernatural occurrence;<sup>1</sup> but its characteristic is that, whether natural or supernatural, it must be more outward than that which it is designed to prove. The sign is not intended for him who works the miracle, nor yet for him on whom the miracle is wrought; these are already supposed to be in possession of that hidden life which is its own evidence. The sign is meant for the outside world. It is to be, to men beyond the Christian pale, the indirect evidence of that which they cannot know directly; and, as such, it must be a distinctively outward manifestation addressed to the organs of sense, sufficiently outward to meet the unspiritual, sufficiently wonderful to authorize the belief in the unknown something called spirituality: St. Paul himself declares its purpose to have been "*To make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed.*"

Let us now ask if the Pauline miracles are such as we should have expected on the supposition that our Gospels are true. Are they such as would find their germ in our authorized historical narrative? Paul gives us a catalogue of them in 1 Corinthians xii. 8-10. One of them is translated, "Working of miracles"—a very unhappy rendering, because it ignores the fact that, in the view of St. Paul, all were equally supernatural; it seems to us that the simplest rendering would be "operation of powers," understanding by the word "powers" dynamical forces within the man,

<sup>1</sup> In St. Matthew xvi. 3 the sign and thing signified are matters of natural observation.



impelling him, and enabling him, to do great things; when, we turn to Galatians iii. 5 we find that there "powers" are directly referred to the influence of faith; we recall the fact that in our present Gospel there is ascribed to faith a dynamical efficacy which is symbolized in the power to arrest the growth of the fig tree or to command the mountain to be removed into the midst of the sea. Another class of the Pauline miracles is described as "gifts of healing"; and the connection of this with our Gospels requires no comment. A third order of men are said to be endowed with the power to "discern spirits"; on the supposition that our Gospels are true, this would seem to us to have its basis in the ability to distinguish the subjects of demoniacal possession, and the power to separate between the man's own consciousness and the foreign consciousness which had been thrust upon him. The "divers kinds of tongues" would find their beginning and their germ, or, at all events, their parable and prophecy, in those works by which the Master had restored speech to the dumb. The "gift of prophecy" would have its warrant in the promise of a Spirit which should reveal the things to come—not simply the foretelling of what *should* be, but the revelation of what in the nature of things *must* be. The "word of wisdom" and the "word of knowledge" would derive their claim to a supernatural origin from those declarations of the Christian Founder in which He maintained that flesh and blood could not reveal, but only the Spirit of the Father. All this might be clearly and legitimately deduced on the assumption that our Gospels are true; in the absence of that assumption we may not go so far: but we are entitled with absolute confidence to say that the method of the Pauline miracles is that identical method with which we have been made familiar by our Gospel narratives.

We now come to the second question involved in this subject. If we shall find, and we must find it, that St. Paul



claims the power of working miracles, how does that affect the Christ of history? The common answer is, it proves the Christ of history to have Himself possessed that power; because it would be a contradiction in terms to suppose that the power of the disciple was inferior to that of the Master. Logical as the inference is, it greatly underrates the strength of the case. According to St. Paul, it was the Christ *alone* who possessed the power of working miracles. He says, in the very passage under consideration, "I will not dare to speak of any of those things which *Christ* hath not wrought by me." He does not say that he has wrought them through Christ; he is only a member of the Divine body; he lives because Christ lives in him. His claim to work miracles is, with him, no more than a claim to be in union with the person of the Christian Founder; and he values the working of the miracle chiefly as a proof and symbol of his being united to the life of that Founder. It may be said, it has been said, Why does not Paul appeal as evidences of Christianity to the personal earthly works of the historical Christ? The answer seems to us not to be far away. It never occurred to Paul for a moment to suppose that he was separated from the Christ of history by any spatial or temporal barrier. It never occurred to him that he was enjoying an inferior privilege to those whom we now call contemporaries of the Son of Man; he held himself to be a contemporary. The continuity of his consciousness of the Master had never been broken; the resurrection of Christ was to him a fact as historical as the death. To the eye of our nineteenth century, Christianity presents the aspect of a temporary interruption to the world's order which speedily faded away into the old routine. To the eye of St. Paul, Christianity presented the aspect of a new revelation of this world's order, which was to constitute the permanent light through which man was to gaze on nature. The earthly ministry of the Son of

Man was to him an eternal ministry; it had never been closed by death, for death itself had been superseded by resurrection. To the mind of the Apostle, the history of the past had no need yet to be written; for the past was to him still the present. The things of yesterday had, for him, no distinctive or peculiar interest; for the Being whom he recognized as the Founder of Christianity was one whom he could have described, in the language of one of his own school, as "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

G. MATHESON.

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## ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN INSCRIPTIONS IN THEIR BEARING ON THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

### V. NIMROD AND THE GENEALOGY OF GENESIS x.

IT is at first a somewhat surprising result of the studies of Assyriologists, that as yet no certain trace has been discovered of one whose name has been, from a very early period, prominent in many of the legends and traditions that gather round the history of Assyria. No interpreter has yet identified any combination of cuneiform characters with the name of Nimrod.<sup>1</sup> Whatever explanation may be given of the fact, it at all events bears testimony to the caution and accuracy of the interpreters as a body. Few temptations would have been greater to an imaginative scholar than that of discovering, if it were possible, even at some sacrifice of the precision which is an element of a

<sup>1</sup> Mr. George Smith, however (*R. P.*, iii. 6), finds the name NIN-RITU on a brick in the British Museum, as that of the guardian deity of Eridu, one of the earliest Babylonian cities. The fact that the name appears in the Egyptian inscriptions of Pianichi-Meramon, translated by Canon Cook (*R. P.*, ii. 85), is worth noting, though as yet, no inferences have been, or perhaps, can be, drawn from it.

scholar's truthfulness, something that could be construed into a distinct reference to the "mighty hunter." It will be seen as we proceed, that one distinguished expert has so far yielded to the temptation as to believe, though with the fullest admission that his work was but tentative, that he had lighted on such an identification.

The width and permanence of the Nimrod traditions may conveniently be dealt with before entering on this alleged discovery. (1) In Gen. x. 8-10, we have them in their simplest form. Nimrod is the son of Cush, *i.e.*, belongs to the Cushite or Ethiopian race. He "began to be a mighty one (LXX. *γίγας* = giant) upon the earth." It passed far and wide into a proverb, "Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech and Accad in the land of Shinar. Out of that land went Asshur (or, with most modern scholars, "out of that land he, *i.e.*, Nimrod, went into Asshur" = Assyria,) and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; the same is a great city." Here then Nimrod appears as the founder of both the great ancient cities on the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris, and of other cities, at one time hardly inferior in importance, in the same region. He begins his career in Babylon and extends it to Assyria. His repute as a hunter acquires a world-wide fame. A shorter form of this record appears in 1 Chron. i. 10; and in Micah v. 6, the "land of Nimrod" appears as connected with, and yet distinguished from, the "land of Assyria." (2) In Josephus (*Ant.*, i. 4), representing, of course, a very late form of the Jewish tradition, the history is surrounded with mythical accretions. Nimrod was the chief mover in the building of the Babel tower, and he aimed at making it so high that the waters of another flood should not reach it. He "changed the government into a tyranny, that so he might turn men away from

the fear of God." (3) A later Jewish legend, in the *Targum* of Jonathan in Gen. xv. 7, and reproduced (though without mention of the name of Nimrod) in the Koran (*Sur.* ii., xxi., ed. Rodwell), brings the tyrant hunter into contact with Abraham. The young prophet-patriarch refuses to join in the king's idolatry, breaks the idols, and is thrown, like the "three children" of Dan. iii., into a fiery furnace, from which he is miraculously delivered. (4) More striking still, as a testimony to the wide prevalence of these and other like legends, is the constant occurrence of the name in the more notable localities of modern Mesopotamia, such, *e.g.*, as the *Birs Nimrud*, identified, as we have seen, with the site of the Tower of Babel, the *Tel Nimrud* near Baghdad, the dam of the *Suhr el Nimrud* across the Tigris below Mosul, and the mound of *Nimrud* in the same neighbourhood (Art. *Nimrod*, in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*). Sir A. H. Layard's narratives of his explorations in Nineveh shews that the local feeling of the Arabs still looks to Nimrod as the great hero of the region, and when his workmen brought to light the figure of a human-headed bull, they exclaimed with one voice that they had discovered the "giant hunter." (Layard, quoted by Vaux, *Nineveh and Persepolis*, i. p. 219). The absence of any trace of the name in the Greek writers who drew, at greater or less distance, from Assyrian sources, is, in view of the wide-spread fame thus evidenced, sufficiently striking. Berosus, as far as the extant fragments of his history go, makes no mention of him. Herodotus and Justin are equally silent. A possible explanation is, that the name Nimrod, which has been interpreted as meaning "the rebel," or "the scorner," or "the hero," (Gesenius, *Thes.*, s. v.) may have been an epithet which took the place of a name, and leaves it open to us to identify the man so described with some one of those who are prominent in Assyrian records. On this assumption, there have been sufficiently numerous conjectures, and

Nimrod has been found, as by Eusebius and Africanus, in the Evechous, (possibly, as Lenormant suggests, = Avil Cush = man of Cush) whom Berosus names as the first king of Babylon; in Ninus, the *eponymus* founder of Nineveh; in Bel, the second name in the first triad of Chaldæan deities; by Sir H. Rawlinson in Nergal (= great hero) the hunter god of Assyria; by Mr. A. H. Sayce in Merodach, the god of Babylon; by Mr. George Smith, in the earlier stage of his discoveries, in Hammurabi, the first of a series of Arab kings of Babylon named by Berosus; or treated, as by Oppert, as simply a "geographical expression" (Smith's *Chaldæan History of Genesis*, pp. 179-181). By others, again, he has been identified with the Orion of Greek mythology and astronomy, who appears in Homer (*Od.* xi. 572-5) as a giant hunter. It is at least a curious coincidence that Persian astronomy gives the name of "the giant" to the constellation which we know as Orion. Mr. Sayce, lastly, in the edition of Smith's *Chaldæan History of Genesis* just published, thinks it probable that the name Nimrod may = Anamarda = God of the city Mared (p. 191).

In the volume just referred to, Mr. Smith puts forward another theory, and identifies Nimrod with the hero Izdubar, whose name has already met us in the Chaldæan legends of the Deluge. He rests this identification mainly on the character of Izdubar as a hunter, a "mighty giant," who "like a bull towers over the chiefs;" as the conqueror of Erech, then under an Elamite king, named Hambaba; on his appearing on seals and bas-reliefs in conflict with lions and bulls (p. 239), or as in the Khorsabad sculptures, strangling a bull in his arms (p. 174). He adds, that he has evidence, accumulating in force, that the characters which had before been provisionally read as Izdubar (a reading which he was led to reject), really admit of being transliterated as Nimrod. If this latter fact were adequately proved, it would, of course, be practically decisive; but



Mr. Smith's death prevented him from submitting the evidence to the judgment of competent experts, and the question must be considered as still a *lis sub judice*. In any case the description of Nimrod as the "mighty hunter before Jehovah," paints, with a striking vividness, the type of the life of the early Assyrian kings. The sculptures from *Khorsabad* and *Koujunjik*, discovered by Sir A. H. Layard and M. Botta, are full of hunting scenes, in which lions and panthers are the object of the chase. One memorable inscription, ascribed conjecturally (the part containing the king's name being effaced) to Assur-natsir-pal, or Tiglath Pileser I. (*R. P.*, xi. 7) is occupied entirely with the records of such an expedition. A few lines will be sufficient as a sample.

"Ninip and Nergal who love bravery, over the wild beasts of the field

have conferred on him power: in ships of Arvad  
he sailed, a grampus in the Great Sea he slew;  
fierce and large wild bulls in the city of Araziki:

\* \* \* \* \*

the young wild bulls which he captured alive  
he brought to the city of Assur; 120 lions, with his heart  
valiant in brave attacks on his open chariot,  
on foot with a club he slew;

\* \* \* \* \*

Wild goats, deers, spotted stags,  
ibexes in herds he took;

\* \* \* \* \*

leopards, tigers, jackals, two powerful bears  
he slew . . . wild asses and  
gazelles, hyenas, and *sim-kurri*  
he killed."

And so on, ending with a "great black crocodile, scaly beast of the river," and animals from the Great Sea, which the king of Egypt caused to be brought. So in the inscription of Tiglath Pileser (*R. P.*, v. 21) we find the king

recording, with triumph, how he had "extirpated all wild animals," slain four wild bulls, and ten wild buffaloes and brought their skins and horns, and four of the buffaloes alive to his city of Ashur, and had laid low not less than eight hundred lions. "All the beasts of the field and the wild birds of heaven I made the victims of my shafts."

On the rest of the genealogy of Gen. x., however, now regarded by all scholars, not as a pedigree of generations of men, but as an early attempt at an ethnological or geographical classification of the known nations of the world, based probably both on Assyrian and Egyptian traditions, the Assyrian inscriptions throw abundant light. By some writers (Lenormant, *Anc. Hist.*, i. 348) the title of "King of the Four Races," assumed by Rimmon-Nirari, (*R. P.*, i. 3) has been connected with the four cities named in Gen. x. 10.<sup>1</sup> Erech (the name survives in the modern *Warka*), is, as we have seen, prominent in the Izdubar legends, and is named among the conquests of Sennacherib (*R. P.*, i. 26). Accad and Shinar (the latter name appearing as *Sumeri*) make up together the compound title of the kingdom of Assyria, as in the inscriptions of Rimmon-Nirari (*R. P.*, i. 4), of Khammurabi (*R. P.*, i. 6), Accad by itself in those of Samas-Rimmon (*R. P.*, i. 21) and Assurbanipal (*R. P.*, i. 74, 106). To the former name Mr. Sayce assigns the meaning of "highlander," and finds in the people whom it represents, a people of the Finnic-Tatar or Turanian race, who came from the mountainous country to the south-west of the Caspian, and were at once the earliest population of Babylonia whom we know, and the inventors of the cuneiform characters. The word Accadian is accordingly used by him both for the language and the institutions of that people (*R. P.*, iii. 21). Calah (identified with the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Sayce, however, the translator of the inscription, finds the "four races" in the Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash, the sons of Aram (= Syria) in Gen. x. 23 (*R. P.*, i. 3). This title continued to be used as late as the reign of Sennacherib (*R. P.*, xi. 49).

Nimroud ruins) (Gen. x. 11) appears in the inscriptions of Samas-Rimmon as "the crown of perfect places, the seat of the Southern Sun" (*B. P.*, i. 12). Calneh, (probably= fort of *Anu*, a Babylonian deity, and identified with the ruins at *Niffer*) though not as yet found in the inscriptions appears in Isa. x. 9; Amos vi. 2, as standing on the same level of greatness with Carchemish and Hamath. Rehoboth (=the streets or open places of the city) may, perhaps, be traced in the name *Rahabeh*, given to the remains of two cities, one on each side of the Euphrates, a little below its confluence with the *Khabour*. The ancient versions of this passage, however, shew that this claim is not without competitors. (1) The Samaritan Pentateuch gives *Sutcan* instead of Rehoboth, and this name has been found in connection with Calah in an inscription on the breast of a statue of the Assyrian god Nebo, found by Sir H. Rawlinson at *Nimroud* (*Athenæum*, April 15th, 1854). (2) Jerome, translating both parts of the name as above, "*plateæ civitatis*" (Vulg.= open places of the city), and in so doing following the Targums, identifies it with Nineveh. The name of the Bœotian city Plateæ or Plataea, memorable in the history of the Peloponnesian war, presents, on this supposition, an interesting parallel. Of Resen, the "great city" of Gen. x. 12, no trace has as yet been found in the inscriptions, but, as lying between Nineveh and Calah, its site has been placed by Professor Rawlinson between the modern *Mosul* and *Nimroud*, which are identified respectively with those two cities.

## VI. UR OF THE CHALDEES.

The city thus named has for us the special interest of being the starting point of the history of Abraham. It does not appear again in the later books of the Old Testament, save in the reference to the history of Abraham in Nehemiah ix. 7, and this is at least presumptive evidence that its im-

portance belonged chiefly to the earlier stages of Chaldæan or Babylonian history. In this instance the inscriptions have thrown a decisive light into what was before a region of widely divergent conjectures. (1) The prevalent tradition of both Jews and Mahometans has identified Ur with the modern *Orfah*, the Edessa of Greek geographers. The chief mosque of *Orfah* bears the name of Abraham, the pond attached to it is the "Lake of Abraham the beloved." In a Syrian tradition, preserved by Ephraem-Syrus, whose long residence at Edessa gives a special interest to his report, in the fourth century, Nimrod appears as a king of Edessa. (2) Ur has been found in the modern *Warka*, but this has been shewn (as above) to correspond with the ancient Erech of Gen. x. 10. (3) Eusebius (*Præp. Evang.*, ix. 7), quoted by Professor Rawlinson (*Dict. of the Bible*, Art. *Ur of the Chaldees*) cites a Greek historian, Eupolemus, who lived B.C. 150, as stating that Abraham was born in Camarina, a city of the Babylonians, which some call Uria, and which being interpreted, means city of the Chaldæans. (4) Ammianus Marcellinus (xxv. 8), in his account of the campaign of Jovian, after the death of the Emperor Julian, describes Ur as a fortress lying between Nisibis and the Tigris, and this identification was accepted by Bochart (*Phaleg.*, i. 10; ii. 6) and Gesenius (*Thesaurus*, s. v. *Ur*). Prior to the discovery of inscriptions it was open to infer, on philological grounds, that as *Kamar* in Arabic and *Chaldi* in Armenian, each=moon (Rawlinson, as above), the city Ur, or Uria, which bore these names, was connected with the worship of a Moon-deity.

This inference has been decisively confirmed by the evidence of inscriptions found at *Mugheir* or *Umghair*, situated on the Euphrates a little below the point at which it receives the *Shat-el-Hie* as an affluent from the Tigris. The name *Mugheir*, which signifies "the mother of bitumen," corresponds with the character of the ruins,

which represent the oldest style of Babylonian architecture, consisting of bricks, partly baked and partly sun-burnt, laid in a cement of bitumen. At the northern end of the mound there are the remains of a stately temple, built in stages, and from the frequency of tombs, with inscriptions ranging over a period of some centuries, it would appear to have been used as a cemetery city almost from the rise of Chaldean power to its fall under the Persian monarchy (*Dict. of the Bible*, Art. *Ur of the Chaldees*).

From these ruins the following inscriptions have been obtained, and it will be seen that they confirm the inferences drawn on philological grounds from the passage quoted above from Eusebius, and supply abundant evidence of the identification of *Mugheir* with the long sought *Ur-Chasdim*, or *Ur of the Chaldees*.

- (1) Uruk, king of Ur,  
Who the house of Ur built.
- (2) To Ur his king, Uruk, king of Ur,  
His house built, and the wall of Ur built.
- (3) To Ur, the lesser light of heaven,  
Eldest son of Bel the king.

It appears from these inscriptions (*R. P.*, iii. 9), found on bricks from the foundations of the buildings at *Mugheir*: (1) that *Ur* was the old name of the city; (2) that it was also the name of a deity; (3) that this deity was identified with the moon as "the lesser light of heaven." Inscriptions from other parts of the same region shew that the power of Uruk extended over many cities: Erech, Larsa, and Nipûr. The remains of his buildings exceed those of every other Chaldean monarch except Nebuchadnezzar, and he appears to have been specially conspicuous as a builder of temples (*R. P.*, iii. 11). In other inscriptions he describes himself, as do most of the early Chaldean monarchs, as king of Sumir and Accad. His son Dungi adopted the same titles and



finished his father's works. An inscription on a cylinder in the reign of Nabonidus (B. C. 555-538), many centuries later, shews that the fame of the founder still remained (*R. P.*, iii. 12).

“Bitsaresir, the tower of Bitnergal which is in Ur,  
Which Uruk, the very ancient king had built,  
And had not finished it. Dungi his son its top finished.”

Other records give the names of later kings of Ur (*R. P.*, iii. 12-15) who ruled also over Eridu, and Nipur, and were lords of the region of Sumir and Accad. A far-off echo of the fame of Uruk<sup>1</sup> may possibly be traced, as suggested by Professor Rawlinson, in the lines of Ovid. (*Metam.*, iv. 212).

“Rexit Achæmenias urbes pater Orchamus, isque  
Septimus a prisca numeratur origine Beli.”

“The Achæmenian cities owned of old  
The sway of Orchamus, whose lineage counts  
As seventh in order from the ancient Belus.”

The “Achæmenian cities” are those of the Persian kings who claimed descent from the Achæmenidæ, the noblest family of the Persian tribe of the Pasargadæ (*Herod.*, i. 125), and the reference to Belus shews that Ovid here also, as in the Deucalion legend, coming into contact with Asiatic traditions, looked on Orchamus as one of the earliest rulers of the Babylonian monarchy, to which the Persians had succeeded.

Over and above the interest which attaches to this identification of the original home of Abraham, it may be noted that the facts thus brought to light give a certain measure of probability to the Jewish traditions which connect the patriarch's migration with his refusal to join in the worship of the sun and moon, which had been introduced by the early Babylonian rulers. “He looked,” so the legend runs, “at the sun, as it rose and set, at the moon as it waxed and

<sup>1</sup> Recent Assyriologists read the name as Lig-bagar (Tomkins, *Studies on the Times of Abraham*, p. 3).

waned, and his spirit craved for a God in whom was 'no variableness or shadow of turning,' the Eternal and Unchangeable." The occurrence of the name NIN-RIDU (as above) as belonging to a deity worshipped at Eridu in the same region as Ur of the Chaldees, may possibly (I speak with natural hesitation) connect itself with the legends which associate Nimrod with the later legends of the life of Abraham.

## VII. THE FOUR KINGS OF GENESIS xiv.

It is obvious, at first sight, that the chapter which records this invasion, has the character of a fragment of history incorporated into the Book of Genesis from some earlier records. It gives the narrative of an attempt on the part of a confederacy of Mesopotamian rulers, the forerunner of later Assyrian and Chaldean invasions, to establish their dominion over the land of Canaan and the valley of the Jordan, and though it obtained only a temporary success, it seems to have crushed or swept away many of the earliest known tribes of Palestine, such as the Emim, the Rephaim, the Zuzim and the Horim. It remains for us to see how far the inscriptions throw light on this remarkable episode.

The list of the confederate kings as given in Gen. xiv. 1, stands as follows: "And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations (Heb. *Goyim*); *that these* made war with Bera king of Sodom . . . ."

(1) The name of Amraphel has not been found as yet in any inscriptions, and Gesenius, while suspecting a Semitic derivation, despairs as to finding it; "pandat qui possit" (*Thesaurus*, s. v. *Amraphel*). Professor Rawlinson (*Herod.*, i. 446), on the other hand, suggests a Sanscrit analogue in *Amarapāla*, "the guardian of the immortals." The name of Shinar, however, especially if we identify it with the *Shumir*

of the inscriptions, points here, as in Gen. x. 10, xi. 2, with sufficient definiteness to the plains of Babylon, which included Babel, Erech, Calneh, and Accad, and is in fact translated as Babylonia in two passages of the LXX. (Isaiah xi. 11; Zech. v. 11). Possibly, as suggested by Professor Rawlinson (*Dict. of the Bible*, Art. *Shinar*), the name may connect itself with the Hebrew word *Sh'nè*=two, and 'ar, which was used in Babylonia for "a river," and so may be identical in meaning with the Hebrew *Aram-Naharaim* (=Syria of the Two Rivers) and the Greek *Mesopotamia* (Gen. xxiv. 10; Deut. xxiii. 4), as applied to the same region. The fact that the name of Amraphel stands first indicates probably that, though the actual campaign was under the command of another leader, the king of Shinar had a certain precedence of dignity as the titular suzerain of the country.

(2) In Arioch, it is possible that we have another form of the name of Urukh, mentioned in the preceding section, and identified, with some probability, with the "Orchamus" of Ovid. The same name is found in Dan. ii. 14 as belonging to the captain of Nebuchadnezzar's guard, and this indicates a Chaldean origin. It has been explained by Bohlen, Gesenius (*Thes.*, s. v.) and others as meaning "lion-like," as Nisroch (2 Kings xix. 37; Isa. xxxvii. 38) means "eagle-like" or "great eagle." Ellasar, which does not occur elsewhere in the Old Testament, has been identified with the *Larsa* which appears in inscriptions, and which the Greeks, as in Xenophon's *Anabasis* (iii. 4, 7), naturally turned into the form Larissa, with which they were familiar in their own country. Like Shinar, it belonged to the lower course of the Euphrates and stood on the left bank between Ur (*Mugheir*) and Erech (*Warka*), and the site is now known by the name of *Senkereh*.<sup>1</sup> From the ruins there we

<sup>1</sup> Lenormant, on the other hand (i. 349), identifies Ellasar with Asshur, and so connects it with Nineveh, Resen and the other Assyrian cities east of the Tigris.

have an inscription on a brick, which records the work of the king already named as the founder of Ur of the Chaldees (*R. P.*, iii. 10).

“To Samas (=the sun) his king  
Uruk, the powerful man, king of Ur,  
King of Sumir and Accad, his house built.”

In the form which corresponds to Ellasar we have the city named in the Annals of Sargon (*R. P.*, vii. 47) as subject to Babylon “Morodach Baladan forced a contribution on the towns of Ur, of *Larsa*, of Kisik,” and the antiquity of the city is shown by an inscription of Nebuchadnezzar, found at Senkerch (*R. P.*, vii. 71), “The Temple of Tara, which is the temple of the Sun at Senkerch,<sup>1</sup> from extreme old age had mouldered into ruins,” and Nebuchadnezzar, in his favourite character as the great builder and restorer of temples, repaired it and made it “meet to be a divine dwelling-place.”

(3) The name of Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, occupies a peculiar position in the narrative. Though third in order, he is obviously the leader of the expedition. It is to him that the kings of the cities of the plain pay tribute for twelve years. He and “the kings that were with him” smote the Rephaim and other ancient tribes.

The name of this monarch has not yet been found in the inscriptions, but the kindred form of Kudur-Mabuk has been found at *Mugheir* (=Ur) as Lord both of Syria (Aram) and Elam, as a worshipper of the god Ur, as establishing his son, Ardušin, in singular agreement with the connexion between Elam and Ellasar in the Genesis text, as king of

It is urged on behalf of this view, that Larsa was so near Shinar that it would probably have been under the king of that city instead of taking an independent part in the confederacy. The Larissa of Xenophon is described as being on the Tigris.

<sup>1</sup> It is to be regretted that Mr. Fox Talbot, who translates the inscription, gives the modern name instead of that presented by the cuneiform characters. The substitution of modern for ancient names seems at variance with the first principles of the task of a translator.

the Larsa which has been indentified with the latter city (*R. P.*, iii. 20). A second son, Rimagu, appears in another inscription, also from *Mugheir*, to have ruled over the whole Chaldæan region (*R. P.*, v. 64).

“Rimagu, the powerful man, the high ruler,  
Established by Bel, nourisher of Ur,<sup>1</sup>  
King of Larsa, king of Sumir and Akkad,  
Son of Kudur-Mabuk, Lord of Elam,  
Ur the great he embellished.”

Another king of Elam, bearing a name with the same prefix, Kudur-Nanhundi, appears in the records of Assurbanipal (*R. P.*, iii. 8), as having invaded the temples of Babylonia at a remote period of its history.

“Kudur-Nanhundi the Elamite, who the worship  
Of the great gods did not (fear),  
Who in an evil resolve to his own force (trusted),  
On the temples of Akkad his hands he had laid  
And he oppressed Akkad . . .  
The days were full . . .  
For 1635 years<sup>2</sup> under the Elamites.”

The date is noticeable in connection with another passage in the “Annals of Assurbanipal,” in which he boasts that after that long interval he had avenged the sacrilege of the old Elamite conquerors (*R. P.*, i. 88).

“The dust of Shushan, Madaktu,  
Hallemas, and the rest of their cities  
Entirely I brought to Assyria.  
For a month and a day, Elam to its utmost extent I swept.  
\* \* \* \* \*

Nana,<sup>3</sup> who, 1635 years  
Had been desecrated, had gone and dwelt

<sup>1</sup> Here probably the name of the Moon-god, and in l. 5, of the city called after him.

<sup>2</sup> The duration of the period is calculated by Mr. George Smith from the Chaldæan “2 *ners*, 7 *sos*, and 15 years.”

<sup>3</sup> A Babylonian goddess.



In a place not appointed for her;  
 And in those days, she and the gods her fathers  
 Proclaimed my name to the dominion of the earth,  
 The return of her divinity she entrusted to me.  
 Thus; 'Assurbanipal, from the midst of Elam  
 Bring me out and cause me to enter into Bit-Anna.'"<sup>1</sup>

It is obvious, though we may be unable to identify either of the kings whose achievements are here recorded, that their inscriptions throw light upon the historical fragment of Gen. xiv. 1. We have a succession of kings of Elam, bearing names that begin with the same prefix. They appear as reducing the original Accadian people to subjection. They plunder the temples of Assyria, and make the kings of Shinar and Ellasar serve as their tributaries.

(4) The last of the four kings appears in our English version as "Tidal king of nations." The LXX., however, gives the form *Ther-gal*, and this, as corresponding to the *Ner-gal*, which was the name of one of the Chaldæan deities (2 Kings xvii. 30), appearing in Biblical names such as *Nergal-Sharezer* (Jer. xxxix. 3, 13), and admitting of an explanation as meaning "the great chief," is probably to be accepted as the true form of the name.

From the peculiar title "king," not of this or that city, but of *Goyim* or "nations," we may reasonably infer that he was the head of a confederacy of nomadic tribes migrating from one district to another in different seasons of the year, and having no settled habitation. The name itself, however, appears in the inscriptions as belonging to a people at one time subject to the Chaldæan rule. *Agukak-rimi*, an early Babylonian king, thus describes himself (*R. P.*, vii. 4):—

"King of the Kassî (= Chasdim — Chaldæans)  
 And of the Akkadî,

<sup>1</sup> Bit-Anna = House, or Temple, of Anu, a Babylonian deity.

King of the vast land  
Of Babylonia.

\* \* \* \*

King of the Goim."

And these are identified with the tribes of northern Elam, the "old home of the Akkadi or highlanders," and as such, naturally subject to its rulers, such as Chedorlaomer.<sup>1</sup>

So at a much later date, Assurbanipal (*R. P.*, i. 74), in the same inscription that records his victory over Elam, describes its king Ummanigas as stirring up to rebellion "the kings of Goim, Syria, and Ethiopia."

Assuming, with many recent scholars, that the chapter which records this invasion of the four confederate kings, is a document inserted from some lost history by the writer of the Book of Genesis, and that the writer of that history was, as we have seen, accurately informed as to the localities of Chaldæa, and the dynasties that ruled there, then comes the question, how was the writer of Genesis, who, whether we accept Mosaic authorship or not, wrote obviously as from an Egyptian standpoint, likely to become acquainted with those records? And the answer is the same as that which has been given to the like question, as to the striking parallelisms between the Genesis histories of the Creation and the Flood and the Tower of Babel, and the traditions of the Chaldæan and Assyrian inscriptions. Without entering into a discussion of the vexed question of the date of the Exodus, it may be sufficient to say that in the judgment of expert Egyptologists, the Pharaohs who were contemporary with the first eighty years of the life of Moses, according to one view (Canon Cook, *Excursus on the Bearings of Egyptian History upon the Pentateuch*, in the *Speaker's Commentary*, vol. i.), include Aahmes I., Thothmes I. and Thothmes II., while

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Budge (*History of Esarhaddon*, p. 145), identifies them with the tribes of the modern Kurdistan.

according to another (Lenormant, *Anc. Hist.*, i. 261), the Exodus coincided with the reign of Menepthah, the son and successor of Rameses II. the Sesostris of Herodotus (i. 237), and therefore after the reign of Thothmes III. It is sufficient for our purpose to note that on either supposition the kings of Egypt had been engaged, before the time of Moses, in long wars with the Canaanites, the *Ruten* or Syrians, and had pushed their conquests as far as Mesopotamia, crossing the Euphrates at Carchemish, and leaving inscriptions to record their victories.

It may not be without interest, as illustrating this statement, to turn from the records of Assyria and Babylonia to those of Egypt, and to quote from the so-called "Statistical Tablet" of Thothmes III., in which we find the narrative (*R. P.*, ii. 24).

"In the year 33, when His Majesty was in the land of the Ruten (=Syria) . . . he placed another where was the tablet of his father, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, RA-MEN KHEPHER-KA (=Thothmes I.). His Majesty sailed to take the towns, and plough the country of the vile Naharaina (=the Aram-Naharaim of the Hebrew of the O. T.=Mesopotamia). . . . He then came to the city of Ninis (=Nineveh) on his return. Then His Majesty set up his tablet in Naharaina to enlarge the borders of Kami (=Egypt)."

It is obvious that continual campaigns of this character would make both the localities and the history of Chaldaea and Assyria familiar to the higher officials of the Egyptian court; and one who, like Moses, was brought up in the palace of the Pharaohs, learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, might well in this way come in contact both with the earlier traditions of the pre-historic age of Gen. i.-x., and with the fragment of actual history now before us.

E. H. PLUMPTRE.

*OUR LORD'S USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.*

## ST. MATTHEW xxiv. 29-34.

CANON FARRAR, in the course of his chapter on "The Home at Nazareth" in his *Life of Christ*, has some interesting remarks upon the nature of the training and culture that the child Jesus must have there received, and implies that the "profound and ready knowledge of the Scriptures, which He afterwards displayed, must have been largely due to the study of them in those quiet years during which He 'increased in wisdom and stature.' That his knowledge of the sacred writings was deep and extensive—that in fact He must almost have known them by heart—is clear, not only from his direct quotations, but also from the numerous allusions which He made to the Law and to the Hagiographa, as well as to Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Joel, Hosea, Micah, Zechariah, Malachi, and, above all, to the Book of Psalms."<sup>1</sup> This thorough knowledge of the ancient Scriptures is of course recognized by all Commentators upon the Gospels, to whatever school they belong; but it sometimes seems as if, like many other truths which are accepted in theory, it was too often lost sight of in practice, and not properly acknowledged to be (what to a great extent it really is) a key to the meaning of our Lord's discourses. We are apt to forget how the Old Testament formed the entire literature of the Jews, and how it was the sole subject of study among them, even more than the Bible was among the Puritans of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when "England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible."<sup>2</sup> "The power of the book over the mass of Englishmen shewed itself in a thousand superficial ways, and in none more conspicuously than in the influence it

<sup>1</sup> Farrar's "Life of Christ," vol. i. p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> Green's "Short History of the English People," p. 447.

exerted on ordinary speech. It formed the whole literature which was practically accessible to ordinary Englishmen; and when we recall the number of common phrases which we owe to great authors, the bits of Shakespeare, or Milton, or Dickens, or Thackeray, which unconsciously interweave themselves in our ordinary talk, we shall better understand the strange mosaic of Biblical words and phrases which coloured English talk two hundred years ago. The mass of picturesque allusion and illustration which we borrow from a thousand books our fathers were forced to borrow from one; and the borrowing was the easier and more natural that the range of the Hebrew literature fitted it for the expression of every phase of feeling. When Spenser poured forth his warmest love-notes in the 'Epithalamion' he adopted the very words of the Psalmist, as he bade the gates open for the entrance of his bride. When Cromwell saw the mists break over the hills of Dunbar, he hailed the sun-burst with the cry of David: 'Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered. Like as the smoke vanisheth, so shalt Thou drive them away.' Even to common minds this familiarity with grand poetic imagery in prophet and apocalypse gave a loftiness and ardour of expression that, with all its tendency to exaggeration and bombast, we may prefer to the slipshod vulgarisms of to-day."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Green's words in the passage just quoted will apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Jewish nation two thousand years ago; and we shall never understand the New Testament aright, unless we have thoroughly grasped this truth. When we have once realized it fully, and are on the look out for allusions, references, and glances back to the Old Testament on every page, we have taken a first step on the road towards a right understanding of it. But it is difficult to realize it thoroughly. A great part of the Old Testament—say the Prophets, and the Minor Prophets

<sup>1</sup> "History of the English People," vol. iii. p. 11.



especially—is so unfamiliar to the ordinary English reader, and indeed to the mass of students of the New Testament, that it requires a great effort of mind, and a special training, to throw ourselves back into the position of those to whom our Lord's discourses were first spoken; and to realize how quick and ready they would be to catch allusions and references to books that formed a part of their ordinary everyday life, even more than the Gospels do of our own. The truth is that the student ought to approach the study of the New Testament through that of the Old, instead of taking it first and as an independent study, as is generally done now. There may of course be great difficulties in the way of this in many cases; but, at least, no student should be without Grinfield's invaluable "*Editio Hellenistica*" of the New Testament, in which he will find passages of the Septuagint illustrative of the text set forth at length, a reference to which will often guide him to the right interpretation of a difficult passage far more surely than the ablest of the ordinary Commentaries.

I propose to test the truth of these remarks by a consideration of a part of the difficult discourse given in St. Matthew xxiv. This discourse was spoken on the Mount of Olives, in answer to the question of the four apostles, Peter, James, John, and Andrew, "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Of the familiarity of *two* of these four apostles, viz. Peter and John, with the Old Testament in all its parts, we have ample evidence from their own writings, which teem with allusions to it; and there is no reason to think that James and Andrew were less familiar with the sacred text than their brothers. If, then, we find that, in this discourse, our Lord is taking up and repeating passage after passage of the Old Testament, we may be sure that the allusions and references would be at once caught by those who heard Him; and that the right interpretation

of his words must depend, to a great extent, on the meaning of the passages of the Prophets from which they are drawn.

The first part of the discourse, as far as Verse 28 in St. Matthew's report, is comparatively easy, and is allowed by all critics to refer, *in the main*, to the period that terminated with the destruction of Jerusalem; and there is no sort of difficulty in referring it *entirely* to that period. It is in the following Verses (Verses 29-34) that the greatest difficulties are found. These are referred, by the majority of Commentators, mainly, if not exclusively, to the Second Advent. Dean Alford, for example, writes thus: "In what follows from this verse (ver. 29) the Lord speaks mainly and directly of *his great second coming*. Traces there are (as *e.g.* in the literal meaning of ver. 34) of slight and indirect allusions to the destruction of Jerusalem; as there were in the former part to the great events of which that is a foreshadowing:—but no direct mention." To the same effect Professor Plumptre, in the "Commentary for English Readers," edited by Bishop Ellicott, writes as follows: "From this point onwards the prophecy takes a wider range, and passes beyond the narrow limits of the destruction of Jerusalem to the final coming of the Son of Man." There are, however, two very serious difficulties connected with this view, which are evaded, rather than answered, by Commentators as a general rule, viz.: (1) the events of these Verses are directly connected by a note of time with that which goes before and refers by general confession to the destruction of Jerusalem. ("*Immediately after the tribulation of these days*," etc. [εὐθέως δὲ μετὰ τὴν θλίψιν, κ.τ.λ.] St. Matt. "But in these days, after that tribulation," etc. [ἀλλὰ ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις μετὰ τὴν θλίψιν ἐκείνην]: St. Mark.) In the face of such a very definite note, it is surely outside the mark to assert, as Dean Alford does, that the Lord was speaking "without regard to the interval," an interval which has already extended to nearly two

thousand years; and Professor Plumptre's explanation can hardly be deemed more satisfactory. (2) Verse 34 directly implies that all that has been prophesied up to that point should happen in the lifetime of that generation: "Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." The natural meaning of these words is certainly that the fulfilment would take place within forty years, the period of a "generation" in Scripture; and this is beginning to be freely conceded by the majority of critics,<sup>1</sup> although they seem hardly conscious how fatal it is to that interpretation of the previous Verses which refers them to the end of all things.

We see, then, that the notes of time at the beginning and end of this passage directly suggest the application of the intermediate Verses, not to the Second Advent, but to the destruction of Jerusalem and the establishment of the Christian Church. It remains to examine the Verses in question, and see whether they are applicable to those two closely connected events, and whether those who first heard the words could have understood them in this sense; and I shall endeavour to establish the following points: (1) that the Verses in question are all drawn from the Old Testament prophecies; (2) that the passages quoted directly refer to the destruction of cities and the establishment of a church; and consequently (3) that those who heard the words, and who had asked the questions in answer to which they were spoken, could only have put this meaning upon them. Let us take the verses in question one by one.

Verse 29. *"But immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the*

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's comment appears to be strictly accurate: "*ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη*, i.e. the present generation, which *γενεὰ* with *αὕτη* means throughout in the New Testament. Matt. xi. 16; xii. 41, 42, 45; xxiii. 36; Mark viii. 12, 13; Luke vii. 31; xi. 29, 30, 31, 32, 50, 51. Cf. Heb. iii. 10 (Lachmann)."

*powers of the heavens shall be shaken.*" Commentators, as a rule, refer us to Isaiah xiii. 10, xxxiv. 4, Ezekiel xxxii. 7, Joel ii. 30, as parallel passages; but they fail to insist on the fact that the Verse is really a direct quotation from Isaiah xiii. 10 and xxxiv. 4. If the passages are placed side by side this will be at once apparent.

## MATTHEW xxiv. 29.

## ISAIAH.

The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.

(καὶ ἡ σελήνη οὐ δώσει τὸ φέγγος αὐτῆς.)

And the stars shall fall from heaven.

(οἱ ἀστέρες πεσοῦνται ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.)

And the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

(καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν σαλευθήσονται.)

(xiii. 10) The sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

(LXX. καὶ ἡ σελήνη οὐ δώσει τὸ φῶς αὐτῆς.)

(xxxiv. 4) the host of heaven shall be dissolved.

(LXX. τακήσονται πᾶσαι αἱ δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν.)

And all their host shall fall down.

(LXX. καὶ πάντα τὰ ἄστροα πεσεῖται.)

The order of the two last clauses, it will be seen, is reversed in the Gospel; but the whole Verse is evidently drawn directly from the two passages in Isaiah, which refer respectively to the destruction of Babylon and of Edom. Is it not clear, then, that the reference would at once be caught by the Apostles, and that they would see that their Master was taking up the language in which the Prophet had described the destruction of the world-powers, and applying it to the holy city, which should be as Babylon or as Edom? Just as Malachi had closed his prophecy with a solemn warning that Israel might incur the fate of the Canaanites who had been driven out before them, "Lest I come and smite the land with a ban," (חֲרָם) as if to say that, could Israel resemble the Canaanites in character, it will also

necessarily share the fate of that people ; so the Lord would say that Jerusalem shall be destroyed as were the world-powers, whose sins it was imitating. It is, it may be added, a strong confirmation of this view that St. Peter quotes the similar passage in Joel ii., in his discourse on the day of Pentecost, and refers it to what was then happening, and not to the end of all things, as might have been expected.

Verse 30. "*And then shall appear the sign* (τὸ σημεῖον) *of the Son of Man in heaven.*" It would be wearisome to collect all the suggestions that have been offered as to *what* this sign is to be. The favourite explanations either identify the "sign" with the Son of Man, as Bengel (*Ipse erit signum sui*), or take it of the cross ; but it appears to have escaped notice that in those passages of the Old Testament where Isaiah speaks of a standard the Septuagint renders the word **סֵּל** by σημεῖον no less than *four* times (xi. 12 ; xiii. 2 ; xviii. 3 ; xxxiii. 23), by σημαία once (xxx. 17), and by σύσσημον three times (v. 26 ; xlix. 22 ; lxii. 10). The word is only found in Isaiah in two other places (xi. 10 ; xxxi. 9), and there the Septuagint has quite missed its meaning, as it has in three out of the five passages where it is found in Jeremiah ; while in the two remaining ones (xxviii. 12, 27, Heb. li. 12, 27), it is rendered by σημεῖον. Is it not fair to conclude from this that the word which the Lord actually used (if he spoke in Aramaic) was **סֵּל** or **סֵּלָא**, both of which are used in the Targum for "standard," and that when he spoke of the "sign of the Son of Man" appearing in heaven He was alluding to such passages as these ? "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an *ensign* of the people ; to it shall the Gentiles seek : and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from



the islands of the sea. And He shall set up an *ensign* for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isaiah xi. 10-12). "Behold I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my *standard* to the people, and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders" (Isaiah xlix. 22). "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people: cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones: lift up a *standard* for the people" (Isaiah lxii. 10). All these passages refer to the establishment of a catholic church, and nobody thinks of interpreting the details literally, or of inquiring *what* the standard is. Would, then, the Apostles, whose minds would be thoroughly familiar with them and revert to them at once, be troubled by the difficulties that perplex modern Commentators, and not rather take the words as purely figurative, just as we ourselves do the similar passages of the Old Testament?

"*And all the tribes of the earth shall mourn.*" The reference here is confessedly to Zechariah xii. 12-14, verses that immediately follow the passage "they shall look on Me whom they pierced," which is quoted by St. John (xix. 37) as having received a fulfilment at the Crucifixion. This of itself leads us to expect that the words which follow have their reference to the era that commenced with the Crucifixion and all the events that followed close upon it, and not to a far distant future. The passage, Zechariah xii. 1-xiii. 6, forms a section by itself; and, if read as a whole, will easily be seen to refer to the establishment of the Christian Church, and the outpouring of the Spirit of Grace upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that they should bitterly repent of the death of Messiah, and purify themselves from all iniquity. "The time and full commencement of the fulfilment," writes Keil, on Verse 10 *seq.*, "shews itself in the success which attended the preaching of Peter on the first

day of Pentecost, namely, in the fact that three thousand were pricked in their heart with penitential sorrow on account of the crucifixion of their Saviour, and were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins (Acts ii. 37-41), and in the further results which followed the preaching of the Apostles for the conversion of Israel (Acts iii. 5)."<sup>1</sup>

"*And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.*" The allusion to Daniel vii. 13, 14, is noted by all Commentators; but the majority of them have failed to point out that the prophecy refers, not to the consummation of the kingdom at the last day, but to the setting up of the kingdom on earth, *i.e.* the establishment of the Christian Church. If the verses be read in connexion with what goes before, instead of being isolated and severed from the context, this will be perfectly clear. The Prophet first sees the four beasts (the first like a lion, the second like a bear, etc.), representing four great world-powers; and then, after this, he says: "I saw in the night visions, and behold *one like a Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven,*" etc. "The dominion which had been exercised by tyrants was henceforward to be entrusted to the saints of the Most High. The former rulers had come forth from the sea, the symbol of all confusion and instability; the Divine Ruler came from heaven."<sup>2</sup> And that the interpretation which connects this prediction with the establishment of the Church on earth, rather than with the end of all things, is the true one, is rendered almost a certainty by the fact that the very same passage is referred to by our Lord during his trial before the high priest; and that the vision of the Son of Man is then spoken of, not as in the far distant future, but as being "from henceforth" (*ἄρτι* in St. Matthew xxvi. 64; *ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν*, Luke xxii.

<sup>1</sup> Keil on the Minor Prophets, vol. ii. p. 389.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Westcott, in the Speaker's Commentary, on St. John i.

69); clearly implying that it was a spiritual vision to begin at once. And again, when the same passage is referred to in St. Matthew xvi. 28 (=Mark ix. 1; Luke ix. 27) the vision is placed apparently in the lifetime of some of those standing by. We conclude then that the expression, where it occurs in this 24th chapter, has no other reference than that, and is to be referred to the "coming of the Son of Man" which took place when the Christian Church was established upon the ruins of Judaism.

Verse 31. "*And He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet*" (or "with a great trumpet," *μετὰ σάλπιγγος μεγάλης*: Tisch.) "*and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*" The general thought, and in part the phraseology, of this Verse is drawn from Isaiah xxvii. 12, 13, and Zechariah ii. 6. The first of these passages runs as follows: "And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and *ye shall be gathered* (LXX. *συναγάγετε*) *one by one*, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day that *the great trumpet shall be blown* (LXX. *σαλπιούσι τῇ σάλπιγγι τῇ μεγάλῃ*), and they shall come, which were ready to perish in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem."

Here we notice (1) the blowing of the great trumpet, and (2) the gathering together of God's people, both of which ideas reappear in our Lord's words. The allusion in Isaiah is, confessedly, to the restoration of the Israel of God, and the establishment of a Church (whether it be Jewish or Christian) on earth: why then should we seek for a further reference to the last judgment in words of our Lord plainly drawn from those of the Prophet? It may be well to note too that in Isaiah xviii. 3 we find the blowing of the trumpet connected with the setting up of the standard (as also in Jer. iv. 5, 6, 21; li. 27); a combination which

illustrates and lends some support to the interpretation here proposed of these verses of St. Matthew: viz., that they refer to the trumpet call of the gospel, and the gathering together of the elect of God into a visible Church on earth.

The second passage which would appear to have been in our Lord's mind, and which would certainly have been recalled to the Apostles by his words, is Zechariah ii. 6; a passage directly referring to the restoration of Israel in this world: "Ho, ho, come forth and flee from the land of the north, saith the Lord: for I have spread you abroad *as the four winds of heaven*" (LXX. διότι ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ἀνέμων τοῦ οὐρανοῦ συνάξω ὑμᾶς, words that must have occurred to the Apostles at once when they heard ἐπισυνάξουσιν τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ἀνέμων, while the following words ἀπ' ἄκρων οὐρανῶν ἕως ἄκρων αὐτῶν would have suggested the similar promise in Deut. xxx. 4: "If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost part of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee": LXX. εἰν ἢ ἡ διασπορά σου ἀπ' ἄκρου τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἕως ἄκρου τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἐκεῖθεν συνάξει σε Κύριος ὁ Θεός σου).

There only remains the mention of *the angels* to be considered in this Verse. A little thought, however, will shew that there is nothing in it against the interpretation here proposed; for (1), if we take "angels" in the ordinary sense of the word, we are surely not prepared to deny their ministry on behalf of the faithful now in this world. If angels ministered to the Son of Man on earth, were they not also agents in the establishment of the Church which He came to found? But (2) there is no need to restrict the term to "angels" properly so called. An ἄγγελος had been spoken of by Malachi as preceding the coming of Jehovah, and preparing his way before Him; and this ἄγγελος is again and again interpreted, in the New Testament, of the Baptist. Is there then any difficulty in taking the words before us of the messengers of the New Covenant? (Com-

pare the use of ἄγγελος in Luke vii. 24; ix. 52.) On the whole, however, when we consider that the subject is described from a heavenly point of view, it seems more probable that the *unseen* agents are described than that the human instruments in the work are mentioned. But, whichever interpretation be adopted, there is nothing whatever in it that militates against the application of the words to the founding of the Christian Church.

The following Verses (Verses 32, 33) neither admit nor require any illustration from the Old Testament. They merely form a warning to the Apostles not to neglect the signs of the times; and at least suggest that "all these things" that have just been spoken of shall happen in their lifetime; a view which appears to be rendered certain by the following verse, to which allusion has been already made: "Verily I say unto you that this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." And then, after the parenthetical confirmation of the truth of his words, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away," there follows: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

And here I cannot but think that Bengel was right in pointing out the change from ταῦτα to ἐκεῖνος: "All *these things*," viz. the things just described, shall happen in the lifetime of this generation; but of THAT DAY knoweth no man. According to this view ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκείνη is put absolutely for the judgment day, as in many other passages of the New Testament (cf. Matt. vii. 22; Luke x. 12; 2 Thess. i. 10; 2 Tim. i. 12, 18; iv. 8), and the whole discourse up to this point refers (as we have seen that it well may) to the destruction of Jerusalem and the foundation of the Christian Church; thus giving a direct and clear answer to the first two questions of the disciples, "When shall these things (the destruction and desolation of the temple)



be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming?" While the discourse from Verse 36 onwards refers to their third question concerning the end of the world (*ἡ συντελεία τοῦ αἰῶνος*, for which expression compare Chapters xiii. 39, 40, 49, and xxviii. 20). They, in their questions, had not clearly distinguished between these events, nor, according to the ordinary interpretation of the discourse, did our Lord in his answer. But, according to the view here advocated, He plainly distinguished between the two comings, gave full details in prophetic language and imagery drawn from the Old Testament concerning the *first*, and marked out its date as taking place during the lifetime of his hearers; while of his *final* coming (*παρουσία*) He distinctly refused to tell them, and grounded his refusal upon the fact that "of *that* day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father" (St. Mark xiii. 32).

This interpretation, it seems to me, is simple, and far more consistent, and when we take into consideration how much of the discourse is drawn from the Old Testament prophets, more *natural*, than that which has been commonly accepted. And I may add that it seems to be supported by the closing words of St. Matthew's Gospel, where our Lord promises that his presence shall be with the disciples "until the end of the world," thus distinguishing between his first *παρουσία* which includes his spiritual presence with his Church, and his final one at "the consummation of the age."

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## ABRAHAM'S OFFERING OF ISAAC.

GENESIS xxii. 1-19.

THIS passage of sacred history, as it is generally understood, presents some difficulties which Commentators have sought to remove with only partial success. It is certainly strange, and unlike anything recorded in the Bible, that God should be represented as directing his servant to do that which is elsewhere described as an "abomination to the Lord" (Deut. xii. 31): and that, after commanding something to be done, He should order it not to be done. It is quite clear that Abraham concluded that he was to slay his child; but there is no clear proof that this was ever required of him, or that the historian intended this to be understood. Not unfrequently much labour and ingenuity have been expended in seeking to account for supposed facts, without a proper previous inquiry respecting their reality; and in not a few instances the interpretation of Scripture has suffered in the same way. Our first question should be: Was Abraham commanded to kill his son?

The words of the historian in recording the Divine direction are these: "Take now thy son, thy only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for an offering, upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Gen. xxii. 2: **וְהֶעֱלֹהוּ שָׁם לְעֹלָה**). The common Version reads: "offer him there for a *burnt-offering*"; and thus the manner of the offering is limited, and the destruction of life is commanded. But there is nothing in the Original respecting slaying and burning. There were terms to denote such actions, and these were employed when slaying and burning were to be expressed; but they are not used here. The *noun* is derived from the *verb*, and both are *general* terms, not defining the way in which the offering was to be made.<sup>1</sup> The verb denotes *to*

<sup>1</sup> Gesenius gives these interpretations of the verb and noun: **עָלָה**,

*rise*, or to *raise*, and it is used for every kind of *going up*, or *bringing up*, whether material or mental. The *raising up* of an offering upon the altar is one of the many various applications of the word. The *verb* was always used with the primary general signification; and, when applied to offerings, it was never restricted to one kind. When the *noun* was first used, it must have taken the meaning of the *verb*; for, though its connotation might afterwards change, at first the meaning of the *noun* would necessarily agree with that of the *verb* from which it was derived. In after ages the noun was specially applied to some *burnt offerings*; but certainly this was not the primary signification, and its use in the Levitical law, whatever it may be, would not prove its meaning in the time of Abraham. As the *verb* was never restricted to one kind of offering, both verb and noun would be naturally and properly used with the primary general signification, even if a restricted use were common to the *noun* in ritual regulations. When combined in one expression, the noun would surely have the same meaning as the verb preceding it.

The name *olah* was applied to some burnt offerings; but this does not shew that *burning* ever became a part of the meaning of the name, and certainly is no evidence of its primary use. The name was not given to all burnt offerings, but only to those of which the *whole*, excepting the skin, was placed upon the altar (Lev. i. 9, 12). In other sacrifices only the fat was burnt on the altar (Lev. iii. 16), the bodies of sin and trespass offerings being burnt in another place (Lev. iv. 12). But the whole of the *olah* was placed

ascendit. Hiph. ascendere fecit. Spec. altari imposuit. עֹלָה, quod altari imponitur, in altari offertur,—ascensus, gradus. The same name was given to *offerings going up* to the altar (Gen. viii. 20; Lev. i. 3), and to *steps going up* to the temple (1 Kings x. 5; Ezek. xl. 26). Some have conjectured that the *olah* was so named because the smoke *ascended*. But (1) this was no peculiarity. (2) The name is given to the whole offering, and not to the part which became smoke. (3) The offering is described as *raised to* the altar, and not as *rising from* the altar to the sky; the same action belonging to both verb and noun.

on the altar, and therefore the general name was specially given to it. The addition of the noun to the verb is quite natural, without any change of signification. When we speak of *giving* something for a *gift*, or of *lending* it for a *loan*, or of *pledging* it for a *pledge*, the repetition is only for emphasis. In Hebrew a cognate noun is often put after the verb, to strengthen the expression, and not in any way to limit it (*Gesenius Heb. Gram.*, sec. 135). A similar duplication appears in the statements at the close of the narrative: "Blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thy seed" (ver. 17). "Offer him for an offering" is a stronger expression than simply "Offer him," but it contains no specification. The name *olah* would be the more proper in an intensive form of expression, because it was commonly given to what was, not in part but wholly, offered. Its *completeness* would distinguish one kind of offering from others, as well as its *combustion*; and more so, for many other offerings were burnt on the altar, and the smoke of wood was always ascending from it (Lev. vi. 13). According to the special use of the name *olah* for a whole offering, the direction to Abraham would be to offer his son completely, not to slay and burn him.<sup>1</sup>

It thus appears that a general statement was first made of the required service, as a general statement was made of the appointed place. When Abraham was told to go to the land of Moriah, he was not told to which of the mountains

<sup>1</sup> The Septuagint has, ἀνένεγκε αὐτὸν ἐκεῖ εἰς ὀλοκαύτωσιν. This term shows the *completeness* of the offering as well as ὀλοκαύτωμα; but only the latter would describe it also as a *burnt offering* (Lev. xvi. 24; Ps. li. 21). Both ἀναφέρω and ἀναφορά are put for the two Hebrew words, Schleusner Lex. The name עֹלָה is the proper name for *burnt offerings*, and by its addition to עָלָה the mode of offering by fire is declared, the name alone not shewing this (Exod. xxix. 18; Lev. i. 9, 13, 17; v. 7; viii. 21; xxiii. 18, 37). The common *olah* was killed, skinned, cut in pieces, and then burnt on the altar; but none of these things belonged to the meaning of the name, and none formed any part of the direction given to Abraham. The meaning of a name does not contain all that is to be found in the object. A triangle has three sides as well as angles, but the name does not refer to the sides.

he should go ; and so when told to offer his child, he was not told how he should offer him. As he had to wait for further instruction respecting the place, so he should have waited for further instruction respecting the manner of the appointed offering. The command, to offer his son for an offering, was not a direction to *kill* him, or in any way to hurt him ; but simply to surrender him to God. Abraham would have fully obeyed this command, if he had taken his child to the appointed place and had said : “ Lo, we are here, shew me what to do with him, or remove him to another land ; do to him whatever pleaseth Thee ; he is wholly and for ever Thine.”

But instead of waiting, as he should have done, for further instruction, he hastily supposed that he was to offer his child in the same way in which he would offer a sheep or any other animal. This might be a natural inference, but it was only an *inference* ; and it was neither right nor reasonable. The great difference between animals and human beings should have taught him that what was proper with the former was not therefore proper with the latter. The custom of the heathen around him could be no pattern for his imitation. *They* sacrificed their children as they sacrificed animals ; but he was separated from idolatrous nations that he might not share their evil practices. His error may be in part accounted for by the haste with which he acted. He was right in setting out at once for the country to which he was sent, but wrong in making at once preparation for a mode of sacrifice which had not been prescribed. He was told to take his son, but not to take wood and fire and a knife to slay his son, nor to build any altar. As he had to wait for further directions respecting the place appointed, he should have waited for further direction respecting the mode of offering. The offering was to be made in a distant place, that it might be with reflection and deliberation, and also according to any further instruction. But Abraham



did not wait for this. He hastily assumed that his son was to be a burnt offering; and this unreasonable supposition, when once formed, was fixed and strengthened by his immediately acting upon it, and possibly also by its contrariety to natural affection. We are exhorted to offer ourselves and children to God: but, because we are not accustomed to animal sacrifices, no one ever thinks for a moment that *killing* is enjoined. The conclusion of Abraham could not be justified by the fact that he was accustomed to animal sacrifices: and that it was not right the subsequent prohibition clearly shews.

It is not strange that on this occasion, as at other times, his true faith in God should be combined with human weakness and wrong. He was assured of safety under the Divine protection, but more than once he was guilty of culpable falsehood to avoid a supposed danger; and in relating this the historian leaves the censure to be supplied by the reader (Gen. xii. 13; xx. 13). The promise of God to him respected Isaac (Gen. xxi. 12); and he believed that the life taken would be soon restored (Gen. xxii. 5; Heb. xi. 19). It is therefore scarcely possible that the purpose of killing Isaac should arise in his mind, from a desire to have a more full consciousness of his own faith in God. And if this were its cause, his conduct would have been a sinful compliance with temptation, a temptation like that of our Lord when told by the devil to cast Himself down from the temple. It would have been no exercise of faith in God; certainly not of such faith as was worthy of the highest possible commendation and reward. It has been said that the Divine purpose of the whole transaction was, to discountenance the cruel and impious custom of offering human burnt sacrifices. But surely, if the first command were to kill and burn Isaac, this would rather shew that such sacrifices were sometimes right; while the subsequent prohibition of this particular sacrifice would not shew that they were universally wrong.

Abraham was unquestionably right in the purpose of yielding up his child to God, in whatever way the sacrifice might be required of him ; but he was wrong in not waiting for further instruction respecting the mode as well as the place of offering. He was right in immediately obeying the command which he received ; but not right in seeking to anticipate future directions, by preparing for a burnt sacrifice which had not been ordered. That the mountain would be shewn him was promised ; and the silence respecting any altar might suggest that none would be needed. He was right in trusting that God would restore the life of his child, if the taking away of life were required ; but it was not expressly commanded, and should not have been supposed. His mistake was shewn to him before it could be hurtful in act ; and it is declared to us by the historian, who relates that he was prevented from fulfilling his mistaken purpose. An angel told him that killing his child was not the will of God. It never was the will of God that he should slay his son. This was never commanded. The Scripture states that Abraham did offer up Isaac, and not that he intended to do so (Gen. xxii. 12 ; Heb. xi. 17 ; James ii. 21). He did all that he was required to do ; and therefore his faith and obedience are commended. He was commended for what he did, and not for what he was prevented from doing. In a way not required he shewed his readiness to do whatever might be required of him. His willingness to put his child to death proved clearly his faith in God, as fully as any other way in which he might have been directed to complete his appointed offering. Therefore nothing more was now required of him. Seeing a ram in a thicket not far off, he took this and sacrificed it in the way in which he had intended to sacrifice his son. This offering was accepted, for it was a symbol of his entire surrender of everything to the Divine will ; it was the expression of a full faith in the unchangeable truth and righteousness and

love of God. Certainly the Giver of life has a perfect right to take it as He pleases ; and if Abraham had been directed by God to kill his child, it would have been right for him to obey : but the general evil character of such actions would still remain. No wise parent or governor will, for the sake of discipline, command that to be done which he does not wish to be done. The natural result of such discipline would be to shew that what was commanded was not in itself right, and might not after all be really required. But the commands of God are not arbitrary requirements ; they shew to us what is right and good. "*The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.*"

The lesson of trustful submission to the Divine will, which has always been received from this narrative, remains unimpaired by the interpretation here suggested. Nay, it is more clearly seen ; and there are other lessons which the common interpretation conceals. The gradual indication of the path of duty, which this history shews, agrees with the ordinary method of Divine instruction ; and the mistake of Abraham is like the mistakes commonly made when men needlessly seek to determine beforehand the exact course they will take, or the loss they will have to bear. Very many, because quite sure that it was their duty to yield themselves to God, have wrongly thought they were required to do this in some particular way. Very many, because right dispositions should be cherished and right ends pursued, have thought certain words and certain actions were required, when there was no sufficient evidence of their fitness and propriety. Very many, like Abraham, have fancied they were called to sacrifices which were never required of them, and could never be profitable to men or pleasing to God. But the high commendation of Abraham's faith, notwithstanding the great error associated with it, shews that the principle of moral conduct is alone of supreme importance. The Lord saw the faith

of Abraham, with the danger into which he had fallen, and accepted that which was right, delivering from that which was wrong. If we are hasty in judgment, unwilling to wait for further information and instruction, we shall probably blunder, and have to suffer in consequence. But when the heart is really upright, and there is a humble dependence on God, with a sincere desire to know and do his will, mistakes will be corrected before their worst consequences come, and the help needed will be supplied at the proper time. The Divine approval is not withheld because of human imperfection; even faults and failures will be made ultimately to contribute to our own highest welfare and to that of others.

The grammatical difficulties which may still remain should not prevail against the interpretation proposed, unless they exceed the moral difficulties which attend the common interpretation. On the one side there is the improbability of God's directing Abraham to imitate the wicked practice of the heathen, and then recalling this command because there was a willingness to obey. On the other side there is the improbability of the supposition for which we contend, that a noun retained its radical and generic signification, and did not conform to a limited and later usage. When the case is thus stated, most minds will deem the former improbability to be much greater, and decide accordingly, that Abraham was mistaken in thinking that God commanded him to kill his son, when it was only said, "Offer him for an offering." That Abraham was right in all he thought and did is not stated or implied in the sacred history, nor in any Scripture reference to it; but the contrary appears, when the meaning of words is duly investigated and considered.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Some Jewish rabbis of high authority have maintained that the Divine direction to Abraham was never in any way to take the life of Isaac. Solomon Jarchi, in the twelfth century, wrote a commentary on the Pentateuch,

## THE HOUSE OF MARY.

ANCIENT Jerusalem is not more hidden from the gaze of modern explorers than is the Jerusalem life of our Lord from the student of Scripture. In the one case it is only by excavating, and by sinking shafts through the *débris* of centuries, that we are enabled to go round about her walls and "tell the towers thereof," filling up the large blanks with mere guesses: while, in the other, it is only by looking through the silences and the chance sayings of Scripture, that any light can be thrown upon the home-life at Jerusalem. We do not read of any hospitalities offered to Him within the precincts of the Holy City—the "great suppers" are prepared in the provinces, or at homely Bethany; nor do we read of any "guest-chamber" save that in which the Master and the disciples kept watch for the dark to-morrow. There are, indeed, casual allusions which seem to imply that Jesus studiously avoided lodging within the walls of the city. St. John gives us a solitary statement, "And Jesus went out to the Mount of Olives" (Chap. viii. 1); and though there is nothing in these words but may refer to an isolated act, yet as the same expression is used in the preceding Verse (Chap. vii. 53), where it must refer to an act that was frequent and customary, we infer that the same meaning may be given to this Verse, with the implication

and on Genesis xxii. 2 he remarks: "God did not say to Abraham, Slay him, for it was not the will of the Holy and Blessed that he should slay him, but that he should take him up the mountain, and prepare an offering." Again, on Verse 12 he states that, according to Rabbi Abba, there was a further explanatory conversation in which God said to Abraham, "I will neither violate my covenant, nor change my saying. When I said to thee, Take him, I did not will to change my promise to thee; for I did not say, Offer him, but Bring him up hither. Thou broughtest him up here; now bring him down again." These rabbis understood the *verb* to refer to *going up* the mountain, and it is often so used. But whether right or wrong in this, they were surely right in considering almost any verbal irregularity more probable than the supposition that God could order Abraham to kill and burn his son, the child of promise, the declared heir of an unchangeable covenant; and that Divine authority should enjoin a heathen abomination as a test of faithful obedience.



that going out to the Mount of Olives was the general practice of Jesus. St. Luke lifts the matter out of conjecture, averring that such was his "wont" (Chap. xxii. 39; Chap. xxi. 37). From these passages it is evident that Jesus was accustomed at evening to withdraw from the city—probably for the sake of greater retirement and quiet—to the Mount of Olives, whatever that phrase may mean. In one place (St. Matt. xxvi. 30) "the Mount of Olives" means the sequestered Garden of Gethsemane; and probably in the other instances it refers to Bethany, to whose quiet home the homeless Son of Man was ever welcome. But the narrow means of Bethany would not accommodate the large following Jesus had; for, besides the Twelve, there are many unknown ones, and nameless women of Galilee, who have come up to Jerusalem. How large this following was we may gather from the fact that, after the Ascension, "the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty" (Acts i. 15); and this number, we may suppose, would only include the professed disciples of the new faith, not reckoning those who, while giving their sympathies, had not yet given their names, to the young Church.

And here the question arises, Where was the rendezvous of the new sect? the head-quarters of the world's first Crusaders? for some such central gathering-place would be more than a convenience, it would be a necessity. But here we are left in the dark, and all we can do is to grope our way amongst probabilities, led by the few scattered lights that shine out from the inspired page. Soon as the clearer day of Pentecost dawns, there is one house which rises into especial prominence. It is "the house of Mary, the mother of John" Mark; and as Mary is an aunt of Barnabas, and Mark an intimate friend of Peter, we have in these relationships certain lines of perspective that indicate the missing home and centre. As Mary was so related to Barnabas, who owned estates in Cyprus, it is not altogether an

assumption that she too was a person of position and fortune; and if so, then we are not surprised to find within her house the "linen cloth"<sup>1</sup> or costly sindon, which "a certain young man" left behind him in his flight (St. Mark xiv. 51), nor do we wonder that her house could offer an "upper room," large enough to serve as a meeting-place for the hundred and twenty disciples.<sup>2</sup>

But emerging from these guesses, there meets us an historic fact which not only forms the centre for a deeply interesting narrative, but which also may bridge over the chasm of silence we find in the sacred Record. When Peter was imprisoned by Herod, and miraculously delivered by the angel, as soon as "he came to himself"—for he had lost himself in the sudden wonder—he turned along a (to him) familiar street, and went directly to Mary's house. He knew not yet of the gathering of the Church, and the earnest prayers that had been rising from its chambers; yet he makes for its shelter in preference to all others. And, as we see the Apostle's footsteps turned naturally in this direction, while the Church has selected it as the place of special intercession for the imprisoned one, we need no further proof that "the house of Mary" was a prominent centre and rallying place for the disciples, certainly in the days following the Pentecost, and probably too in the days preceding it.

And here another question arises, Who were the disciples whose love and sorrow would not let them sleep, and who kept the first "watch-night" of the Church? Criticism has passed them by somewhat hurriedly and thoughtlessly, giving an opinion which we venture to suggest may be incorrect; for if the door of the narrative be opened, we think it will appear that this band of importunates was not a miscellaneous group, but a gathering, exclusively, of praying

<sup>1</sup> See *Expositor*, First Series, vol. i. p. 436.

<sup>2</sup> Farrar's "Life of St. Paul," vol. i. p. 320.

Christian women. In Acts xii. 5 we read that "prayer was made without ceasing of the Church"; but since the Church at this time numbered at least five thousand, probably more, the whole body of Believers could not possibly have been present at this unique gathering. And so in Verse 12 we find the expression changed. It is no longer "the Church," but "many" (*ἱκανοὶ*)—a word implying a large number, but still a minority of the whole. And what would be the likely state of the disciples, now that a bitter persecution has set in, and the bloody hand of Herod is pressed heavily against the pillars of the Church? Would not "the brethren" endeavour to save their lives by flight? Would not prudence as well as cowardice suggest a temporary hiding until the storm should have passed by? Neither the Old Testament nor the New approves of recklessness, of running in the face of danger, if the danger can be avoided without any sacrifice of principle. Did not David's harp play mournfully in Adullam's cave and on the hill Mizar? Did not Elijah fly before the wrath of Jezebel? And did not the Lord Himself pass out of the murderous throng at Nazareth and hide Himself away? He did not think it right to push forward the hour which would come only too soon. And would the "brethren" be wrong in following his example, winning many chances of future service by a temporary silence and seclusion? We may at least say that such a course would be both probable and natural; while the godly women of the Church would be in comparative security.

But coming to "the door of the gate," who was the damsel "named Rhoda"? The word damsel (*παιδίσκη*) sometimes means a young female slave, but there are several indications in the narrative that Rhoda was not a mere menial of the house. Her *coming* to the gate seems to imply that the act was perfectly voluntary on her part. Evidently she was one of the "many" disciples who were

gathered within, and one who was very familiar with Peter's voice; for, tremulous as it is with the recent agitation, Rhoda recognizes it, even though the door is not yet opened. And what means this haste, as in her "gladness" she forgets to open the gate, but runs back to break the tidings to those within? It is the haste and gladness of one who is almost delirious in her new-found joy. And does not this fact lead us to the same conclusion, that these midnight and morning watchers are a band of praying women? True we can scarcely judge of those ruder times by the rules of modern social life: but to say the least, it seems very unlikely that a young girl would go to the outer gate, to listen and to report—a task requiring considerable nerve, considering the circumstances of the hour—had any of the brethren been present.

St. Peter's language, however, gives us a clearer testimony. Breathless with the running,<sup>1</sup> and pale with the excitement of her message, Rhoda announces the fact that Peter has escaped from prison, and that he is standing "before the gate." The disciples, however, were "like them that dream"; they "wist not that it was true," until Rhoda's constant affirmations, and the still-continued knocking, convince them that it is something more than a happy illusion on the damsel's part. Then they too leave the inner chamber, and rush to the outer gate, for in Verse 16 the number of the pronoun is changed: "when *they* had opened the door, and saw him, *they* were astonished." And as they stand clustered by the gate, eagerly welcoming him who comes to them as one alive from the dead, Peter does not pass within, but "beckoning with the hand" to silence the tumult of questions, and to hush the exclamations of surprise, he tells "how the Lord had brought him out of the prison." And when he has completed the story he adds, "Go, shew these things unto James, and to the

<sup>1</sup> εἰσδραμούσα.

brethren," implying, of course, that neither James nor "the brethren"<sup>1</sup> are here now, amid this group of delighted listeners.

The only objection to this interpretation of the narrative is the fact that the adjectives and participles are masculine, instead of feminine. But even this is no insuperable objection, since amongst Greek writers the masculine is often used for the feminine, if the question of sex is not the material point.<sup>2</sup>

And so a deeper interest gathers about Mary's house. In the Gospels woman is prominent; now singing the Magnificat, and now "serving" at the feast; now lingering near the cross, and now preparing sweet spices for the embalming or listening to the first "All Hail" of the Easter morning. But in the "Acts," the Maries, the Joannas, and the Salomes seem to retire to a distance; we scarcely see them. In Mary's house we meet them once again; we see them keeping the mournful midnight watch; we hear their voices in tender earnest pleadings: and, as in the Gospels it was a Mary who told "the brethren" how an angel had rolled away the stone, and how Christ had arisen, so now in the "Acts" the Maries announce to James and to "the brethren" how another angel has swept down upon Jerusalem, how Rome's quaternions have again been baffled, and how the Lord "hath appeared unto Simon."

HENRY BURTON.

<sup>1</sup> Dean Alford intimates that by "the brethren" are simply meant "the kinsmen of the Lord"; overlooking the fact that these are called "*his* brethren," not "*the* brethren" (Acts i. 14).

<sup>2</sup> In Acts ix. 37 we have a similar use of the masculine for the feminine.



## THE MIND THAT WAS IN CHRIST.

PHILIPPIANS ii. 5-8.

ST. PAUL is speaking of those who thought more of themselves, and more highly, than they ought to have thought, who had formed a self-asserting vainglorious habit. To these he holds up, as at once a pattern and a warning, "the mind which was in Christ Jesus." This mind revealed itself in two acts, the *kenosis* and the *tapeinosis*; "He *emptied Himself*;" "He *humbled Himself*."

(1) In the first great act in which this great Mind revealed itself: there were two parts. (a) He who was "*in the form of God*" did not "*clutch at His equality with God*," but emptied Himself of, laid aside the form of, God: not the essential *being* (οὐσία) of God, nor the *nature* (φύσις), the essential qualities or properties of God; of these He could not divest Himself; but of the *form* (μορφή), the splendid condition, the royal state, the regalia or paraphernalia of the Godhead. At these He did not clutch; of these He willingly emptied Himself. Those to whom the Apostle wrote clutched at the poor pomps and shows, often and for the most part purely imaginary, which distinguished them above their fellows; while the Master whom they professed to follow and serve cheerfully parted with the unimaginable splendours of his Divine estate. (β) And, then, having divested Himself of "the form of God," He voluntarily assumed "*the form of a servant*," and that He might condescend to this servile form, "*was made in the likeness of man*." He was *made* man; for, in the Incarnation, not the will of the Son alone was concerned, but also the will of the Father; nor the activity of the Son alone, but mainly the activity of the Holy Ghost. But He who was *made* man, *took* the form of a servant. That was the pure determination of his own will. It was for this very end that

He assumed, or consented to assume, our humanity. He renounced the Divine form that He might take a form at the greatest possible distance below it; that He might be able to sum up His whole earthly history in the words (St. Luke xxii. 27), "I am among you as *the servant*" (ὁ διακονῶν). In fine, the disciples who seek to lift themselves as high as they can are warned to consider Him who stooped as low as He could.

(2) In the second act which revealed the Mind of Christ, his self-humiliation is shewn to touch the farthest possible limit. He who humbled Himself to become man, continues to humble Himself when He is man. He who had taken the form of a servant, sets no bounds to his service. He becomes "*obedient*"; obedient "*as far as to death*," obedient "*even to the death of the cross*," cheerfully submitting to the utmost degradation to which his new servile condition exposes Him. As man, He might have set Himself to be a great man, to exercise authority, to win reverence, to command service. But, true to the Mind which prompted Him to empty Himself of the splendours of the Divine form, He is content to dispense with the honours due to the human form. He no more clutches at his equality with the greatest and best of men than He had clutched at his equality with God. He will only be Lord of all by being the Servant of all; and hence He is obedient, obedient to death, obedient even to the cross. Obedience, the harmony of the human will with the Divine will, is the only and proper blessedness of man. Obedience, therefore, is the one aim of Him who was made man; obedience at all risks, at all costs. If death lie in the way of obedience, death shall be welcome; if shame, shame shall be welcome. For obedience to God is the highest service He can render to man.

Humility was surely never so splendidly illustrated or so weightily enforced.

## THE BEAST AND HIS NUMBER.

### REVELATION xiii.

THE Christians who were still living in Rome thirty years after the resurrection of our Lord, were witnesses of scenes which will ever be reckoned among the most terrible in history. They must also have been cognizant of a condition of society more revolting and degraded than any which the world has ever known. The events of that time have found their lurid record in the pages of Tacitus :—the picture of its social degradation and fathomless corruption is photographed in the satires of Juvenal and Persius ; in the epigrams of Martial ; in the loathly fictions of Petronius and Apuleius ; in the coins and gems dug up on the coast of Campania ; in the inscriptions and frescoes upon the walls of unclean imagery which once more shocked the daylight when the lava and scoræ were removed from the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum. It is the surest sign of a nation's political abasement when its history dwindles into prurient anecdotage, and its annalists have little or nothing to record but the personal follies or baseness of its autocrats. At no period is this more essentially the case than in the days of the Cæsars. Though one after another perished by assassination and suicide—Augustus perhaps poisoned, Tiberius perhaps smothered, Caligula assassinated, Claudius poisoned, Nero by his own hand, Galba assassinated, Otho by his own hand after defeat in battle, Vitellius by the hands of the multitude, Domitian assassinated—yet, while they were emperors, they wielded a more tremendous power, and had at their command more inexhaustible resources, than have ever fallen to the lot

of men. The lonely splendour and awful responsibility of their position had the effect of blood-poisoning on the minds of some of them. It told even on the strong brain of Tiberius, and drove him to the tainted and blood-stained solitude of Capreæ. It helped to inflame the sanguinary madness of Caius. It enhanced the natural fatuity of Claudius. But its subtle and deadly intoxication worked most strongly on the feeble brain of Nero. Nero was not mad. His nature, weak as it was and wholly devoid of principle, was not totally deficient in redeeming elements. The exquisite and engaging beauty of the busts which represent him in the days of his innocent childhood shew us the features of one who, if he had grown up in a private position and under wise training, might conceivably have been a respectable and honest man. But Nero had, humanly speaking, no chance. His father was a man exceptionally worthless, and exceptionally wicked. His mother, the second Agrippina, was not only a woman of passionate temper and imperious will, but was one of the most abandoned characters of an abandoned age. His tutor, Seneca, no doubt did his best, but circumstances were too strong for him; and there was a certain insincerity in his own character which gave a hollow sound to his elaborate and sententious aphorisms. The career of Nero, from the time that he emerged into youth, became a career of such headlong degeneracy, that his name sank into a proverb of infamy, and men spoke of him as "a mixture of blood and mud." But the final turning point which plunged him into the abyss of shameless wickedness was the discovery that practically nothing was denied him, and that no atrocity was too enormous to shock the terror and servility of his people.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 13. Obvias tribus, festo cultu senatum, etc. Hinc superbus, et publici servitii victor. . . se in omnes libidines effudit. Dion Cass. lxi. 16, μετὰ τὸν τῆς μητρὸς φόνον. . . δημοσίᾳ. . . ἐθεράπευον.

A living poet has spoken of

“The fierce light which beats upon a throne:”

but the comparative publicity of these days gives us no measure of that which prevailed in the days of the twelve Cæsars. The Roman populace, depraved and idle—the Roman aristocracy, corrupted and deprived of all outlet for their energies in careers of legitimate ambition—had nothing to talk of but their Emperor. The spectacles which occupied their days were due to his munificence, the regular supply of the necessities of life depended on his supervision. Boundless wealth and distinction might follow upon his smile; death or exile lay in his most casual frown. In spite of a hideous multitude of spies and informers, whose whisper might betray any man, however illustrious, to death, the most secret doings of the palace were the common bruit of the multitude. The Emperor himself was often the last man to hear of the disgrace which attached to the nearest members of his family circle. All the world knew the true character of Julia before it reached the ears of her father Augustus.<sup>1</sup> The humblest slave in Rome was aware of the crimes of Messalina, before they came to the knowledge of her husband Claudius.<sup>2</sup> Again and again some slight allusion to some interior secret scandal of the palace was caught up in theatres crowded by fifty thousand spectators, and greeted with shouts of derision and applause.<sup>3</sup> Hence the Christians of Rome must have heard, week by week, and day by day, about the doings and character of Nero, for years before they had reason devoutly to thank God if they were “delivered from the mouth of the lion.”<sup>4</sup> Even during the vaunted peace and beneficence of the first five years of his reign, which used to be spoken of as his “golden quin-

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Aug.* lxx.

<sup>3</sup> Dion Cass. lxxi. 10, 22, 29, 31.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xi. 29, 30.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 17.



*quennium*”<sup>1</sup> they must have heard how the adoption of this youth at the age of sixteen by Claudius, had only been due to the infamous intrigues of his mother, Agrippina. It would soon have become known to all by what cruel plot his step-father was poisoned; by what arts he usurped the throne from his step-brother Britannicus; what aversion he shewed towards his wife, Octavia, the sister of Britannicus; and how before he had been a year on the throne he had poisoned Britannicus at the age of fourteen. The rumours of his friendship with the bad Otho; of his marriage with Poppæa, Otho’s wife; of the banishment and murder of Octavia; of the horrible plots by which he had at last succeeded in murdering his mother Agrippina; of the unworthy follies, the disgraceful orgies, the nameless abysses of iniquity and abomination into which the undisputed master of the world had sunk, would soon be flying from lip to lip. It is impossible to write, or to name, one half of the atrocities and crimes which stain the character of this miserable and incestuous matricide; and to Christians, who could not choose but hear what manner of man he was, there must have been a certain portentous awfulness in the thought that such a monster was the lord of the civilized world, and was, in all things lawful, one of “the powers that be,” to whom civil obedience was due.<sup>2</sup>

But, during the first ten years of this reign, a Christian might take refuge in the thought which, centuries afterwards, consoled the heart of St. Augustine during the horrors of a disintegrating society and the storms of barbarian invasion,—the contrast namely between the city of God in its peace and purity, and the anarchic wickedness of the world. Up to A.D. 64, the tenth year of Nero’s reign, the Christians had found no cause to complain of the Roman power. The grand and saving virtue of the Roman people lay in their respect for Law, and the majesty of

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Nero*. 9, 10; Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xiii. 1.

Roman law had many a time protected Christians from the indiscriminate fury and recklessness of Jewish and Gentile mobs. In the Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, we see how the authority of Gallio, Felix, Festus, even of Pontius Pilate, had been wielded on the whole to protect rather than to injure. The conduct of the little provincial "prætors" at Philippi had been quite exceptional.<sup>1</sup> The "politarchs" of Thessalonica had dealt equitably towards St. Paul.<sup>2</sup> The authority of Proconsuls had been invoked to protect him from mob-violence at Corinth and at Ephesus.<sup>3</sup> He had himself, with some confidence, appealed to Nero at Cæsarea.<sup>4</sup> Up to this time, the Christian—as he observed how the imperial institutions of Rome helped him to disseminate the Gospel, and protected its missionaries from violence, and how it was along the straight roads hammered by "the gigantic hammer of the legionaries" that the feet of the messengers of peace were able to pass to all parts of the civilized world—saw in the existence of Roman Empire a proof of the Providence of God, and waited peacefully for the coming of the Kingdom of Christ.

But in the year 64 an event happened which had an immense significance in the history of the Christian Church; an event which inaugurated the era of martyrdoms, and brought about that direct collision between Heathendom and Christianity which was to end two centuries afterwards in the conversion of the Emperor Constantine, and therefore in the irresistible triumph of holy weakness over the banded forces of the world.

That event was the burning of Rome. The conflagration broke out with fury on July 19, near the Capuan gate, in the part of the Circus Maximus which abutted on the Palatine and Mount Cœlius. Devouring the small shops along the line of the Circus, and swept along by the wind,

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvi. 19. See my *Life of St. Paul*, vol. i. pp. 493–502.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xvii. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xviii. 15; xix. 38.

<sup>4</sup> Acts xxv. 11.

it spread through the lower parts of the city, finding abundant fuel in the high buildings of the narrow and tortuous streets. Raging for six continuous days and nights, it reduced to ashes the immense pile of Nero's palace, and left in its course huge areas of glowing ashes and blackened walls. Then it burst out once more in a range of buildings which were the property of Nero's infamous minister, Tigellinus; and, after having destroyed countless temples, lodging houses, works of art, and ancient monuments, was not arrested till it more or less totally devastated ten out of the sixteen districts into which the city was divided.<sup>1</sup>

It is hardly possible to conceive the horror and misery caused by this terrible disaster. While the flames were roaring along the streets, the noise of the conflagration was increased by the shrieks of women and children trying to snatch what they could from their burning homes, or hurrying to escape from the streams of fire which seemed to meet them in all directions. Many perished in the attempt to save their relatives; many were starved to death; tens of thousands were totally ruined. The destruction of many of the most ancient and hallowed temples of the gods added the terrors of superstition to the sufferings of the densely crowded population, who were now driven to encamp in open gardens and temporary sheds.

Who was the author of this crime, if crime it were? In such a city as Rome, and with the defective appliances and organization of social matters in ancient days, the burning of Rome may have been due to accident. But the impression of the day, caused by many actual circumstances, was that it had been the result of a criminal design; and the suspicions of the people began to fix themselves with deadly tenacity on the still youthful Emperor. It was known that his head was full of Homeric poetry; that the

<sup>1</sup> For the details of this conflagration, see *Tac. Ann.* xv. 38-44.

burning of Troy had seized on his imagination; that he had been heard to speak of Priam as a man to be envied because he had seen his own city in flames. It was further whispered that he had a design for rebuilding Rome and calling it by his own name: and that he profited by the disaster, since he seized additional ground for his "Golden House."<sup>1</sup> It was rumoured that his agents had been seen busily engaged in throwing firebrands, or in menacing those who tried to suppress the flames. It was also said that, during the burning of the city, he had mounted a tower, and there, high above the surging sea of flame, had sat in a scenic dress and sung to his lyre the capture and conflagration of Troy. Many of these stories were absurd, and others owed their origin to the silly language of a man whose brain was fatally haunted by a criminal conception, and who had become hopelessly demoralized from perceiving that not even by the darkest and deadliest of crimes had he diminished one iota of his power, or silenced the frantic adulations of his people from the proudest senator down to the meanest slave. It is in Nero's favour that he was not at Rome but at Antium when the fire began, and that he only returned to the city when the flames rolled up towards his palace and the gardens of Mæcenas. Undoubtedly he gave orders that all possible steps should be taken to relieve the general suffering. He lowered the price of corn, and threw open his own gardens for the people, to diminish the intensity of the odium which the suspicion, if not of his positive guilt, at least of his *complicity*, had excited against him.

Then he tried religious remedies. The Sibylline books were consulted; the matrons of Rome walked in long processions to propitiate Juno, whose temple and statue were lustrated with sea water. Public banquets were given in honour of the gods and goddesses of Rome. It was only

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Nero*. 38. Dion Cass. lxi. 18.

when Nero found that sacred ceremonies were as unavailing as profuse largesses to dissipate the dark clouds of sullenness and fury which were beginning to endanger even his colossal power, that he conceived, or had suggested to him by others, the diabolical purpose of throwing the blame upon the innocent.

"To do away with the rumour," says Tacitus, "he trumped up a false charge against men who were already hated for their enormities, and whom the populace called Christians.<sup>1</sup> Christ, the founder of that name, had been capitally punished, in the reign of Tiberius, by the Procurator Pontius Pilate; and the deadly superstition, repressed for the present, began once more to break out, not only throughout Judæa whence the evil sprang, but even throughout the city whither from all sides all things monstrous or infamous flow together and find votaries. Those therefore who confessed the crime were first arrested, then on their evidence a vast multitude, who were convicted, not so much on the charge of the conflagration as on that of hatred to the human race. Insults added poignancy to their death. They were covered with the skins of wild beasts to be torn to pieces by dogs, or nailed to crosses, or set in flames, and when the daylight failed they were burnt for purposes of nightly illumination. Nero offered his gardens for this spectacle, and gave a Circensian festival, mingling with the mob in the dress of a charioteer or riding in a chariot. Hence commiseration was excited even towards men who were guilty and had deserved the extremest penalties; for it was thought they were being ruthlessly sacrificed, not for ends of public usefulness, but to gratify the savagery of a single man."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This expression is an interesting indication that the name "Christian" was looked upon as a vulgar and more or less unintelligible hybrid. Not understanding the meaning of "Christus" ("Anointed") the Gentiles turned it into "Chrestus" ("Excellent"). See Suet. *Claud.* 25; Lactant. *Inst.* iv. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xv. 44. Sulp. Severus, ii. 29.



An incidental allusion in the epistle of Clemens Romanus<sup>1</sup> reveals to us yet deeper horrors. He speaks of women treated as "Danaiids and Dirces," and so undergoing terrible outrages, and winning a noble crown of martyrdom in spite of their physical weakness. The expression, taken in connection with many contemporary allusions, seems to show that the Christian women had to play their part in terrible "operas" in which the jaded and brutalized sensibilities of a corrupt age were excited by real and not simulated agonies. The same loathsome realism that made Nero and the degraded Romans look on with throbbing delight while Christians were not merely torn to pieces by bloodhounds, but were dressed up as wild beasts whom the dogs devoured, led to their enforcing the presence of Christian women to take part as involuntary actresses in dramas which involved their own martyrdom. After walking in procession upon the stage in mythic dresses as the daughters of Danaus, they were stabbed by an actor who personated Lynceus,<sup>2</sup> or they were rent asunder by wild bulls, to which they were tied, as Dirce was, by actors representing Amphion and Zethus. All that we read in the sanguinary description of other martyrdoms at Lyons, Vienne, and indeed in almost every part of the empire, was thus seen for the first time at Rome, and was directly due to the bloody cruelty and revolting æstheticism of Nero. It is needless to enter into details. Let it suffice to say that the horrors of that year, rendered more horrible from their novelty, were branded as with letters of fire upon the memories of all who bore the Christian name. Henceforth they saw in Nero the consummation of infamy, ferocity, and lust, which marked him out as that Antichrist of whom St. Paul had drawn

<sup>1</sup> Clem. Rom. *ad Cor.* i. 6.

<sup>2</sup> See Renan, *L'Antechrist*, pp. 167-172.

a mysterious outline as "the lawless one," and "the man of sin," in one of his earliest Epistles.<sup>1</sup>

If anything could have added yet deeper horror to that which the whole life and conduct of Nero excited in every Christian breast, it was the sense that his unutterable heathen vileness was but the instrument secretly wielded by Jewish hatred. The Romans *did* on this occasion draw that distinction between Jews and Christians which had no significance for them till nearly a century later,<sup>2</sup> when the Jewish false Messiah Barchocba persecuted the Christians with implacable hatred. How, then, came they to single out the Christians as apart from the Jews on *this* occasion, and to point at the Christians only their exclusive calumny and persecution? The enigma would be insoluble if we did not know from other sources that the Jews had insinuated themselves into the noblest Roman houses, often by the most questionable arts. By such arts they had even gained a secret but powerful influence in Nero's palace. The Empress Poppæa, if not actually a proselyte, was at any rate very favourably disposed to the Jewish religion,<sup>3</sup> and had about this very time given a friendly audience to Josephus, at whose instigation she had used her influence for the liberation of certain Jewish priests.<sup>4</sup> Aliturus, a popular mimist on the Roman stage, had also the private entrée of the palace, and could secure interviews with its most powerful inmates.<sup>5</sup> Nero, to whom no heathen or Christian writer can allude without the ab-

<sup>1</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 3-9.

<sup>2</sup> Tert. *Apol.* 21. Seneca ap. Aug. *De Civ. Dei*, vi. 11. This is perhaps what Clemens means by attributing the Christians' persecutions to "jealousy" (δία ἔηλος). *Ad Cor.* i. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Thus, contrary to Roman custom, she ordered that after death her body should be buried, not burned. Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 6. See Grätz, *Gesch. d. Judenth.* vol. iii. p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Josephus calls this murderous adulteress "a pious woman." *Ant.* xx. 8, § 11.

<sup>5</sup> Jos. *Vit.* 3.

horrence which he deserves, finds something almost like an apologist in the person of the astute and treacherous Jew!<sup>1</sup>

A great French artist has painted a very striking picture of Nero walking through the blackened streets of Rome after the fire. He has represented him as he was in mature age, in the unincinctured robe with which, to the disgust of the noble Romans, he used to appear in public, obese with self-indulgence, and with that fearful cloud upon his coarsened features which they must have worn when his conscience was most tormented by the furies of his murdered mother and murdered wife. Shrinking back among the ruins are two poor Christian slaves, who watch him with looks in which disgust and detestation struggle with fear as he passes by with the lictors striding before him. The picture puts in visible form the feelings of almost appalling horror and astonishment with which the brethren must have regarded one whom they came to consider as the incarnate instrument of demonic antagonism to God and to his Christ—the deadliest enemy to all that is called holy, or that is worshipped.

Did St. John ever see that frightful spectacle of a monster in human flesh? Was he a witness of any of the scenes which, in the year 64, made the air of Rome reek with the blood of martyrdom? We cannot say; but the supposition is far from impossible. Tradition at any rate points in that direction. There may be no direct truth in the stories which represent him as having been miraculously preserved when he was plunged into a cauldron of boiling oil at the Latin Gate,<sup>2</sup> or when he drank unharmed the cup of poison which slew his would-be murderers.<sup>3</sup> But, in the deep silence which falls over every fact of the biography of St. John for twenty years

<sup>1</sup> *Jos. Ant.* xx. 8, § 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Tert. De Præscr. Hæret.* 36.

<sup>3</sup> *Ps. Aug. Soliloqu.* Isidore Hispal. *De Morte Sanct.* 73.

after the days of Pentecost, it is not impossible that these stories at least point to some residence of St. John in Rome; and he may have escaped—may have been compelled by the Christians to retire—from the menace of the storm before it actually burst in fury on their devoted heads. St. Paul, as we believe, was providentially delivered from his Roman imprisonment just in time to be preserved from the Neronian persecution.<sup>1</sup> But for this, who can tell whether St. Paul and St. John might not have stood, each in his “pitchy tunic,” to form those ghastly human torches which flared upon the darkness in Nero’s gardens; or that they might not have been clothed in the skins of wild beasts to feel the bloodhound’s fangs in the amphitheatre? But even if St. John was not in Rome at this period of Nero’s reign, many a terrified fugitive of that “large multitude” which Tacitus mentions, must have brought him tidings about those blood-stained orgies, in which the Devil, the Beast, and the False Prophet—“that great Anti-Trinity of Hell”—were wallowing throughout the mystic Babylon in the blood of the martyrs of the Lord.

Supposing that St. John had written an Apocalyptic book at this time, is it not *a priori* certain that the events at which we have glanced, and the hideous figure of the Antichrist, who then filled the world’s eye, would have been very prominent in such a book? Do not contemporary events and contemporary persecutions figure in each one of the numerous Apocalypses of this period?

And that the Apocalypse *was* written about this time is the view to which all modern criticism is beginning to converge. It is inexcusable at this date to defy every indication of the book itself, and merely to follow with blind credulity the error of Irenæus, who implies that it

<sup>1</sup> See the arguments for this view fully stated in my *Life of St. Paul*, vol. ii. pp. 604-607.

was composed in the reign of Domitian.<sup>1</sup> Against the authority of Irenæus may be placed that of Epiphanius, who says that St. John was banished in the reign of Claudius,<sup>2</sup> and that of the Syriac version which places that event in the reign of Nero. Theophylact, who had many good sources of information, says the same. Two considerations are alone decisive. The one is, that the book was clearly written before the Fall of Jerusalem;<sup>3</sup> the other, that if St. John was the author both of the Apocalypse and the Gospel, the Apocalypse—which is written in Greek more barbarous and solœcistic than that of any other book of the New Testament, as Dionysius of Alexandria observed fifteen centuries ago<sup>4</sup>—must have been written many years before the Apostle had attained, by long residence in Greek-speaking cities, that mastery over the language which he shews in his Gospel and Epistles. Internal evidence would therefore alone suffice to place the date of the book about the year 69; and, if that be the date, it might have been assumed beforehand that the object of the Apocalyptic Seer would be to console the minds of his fellow-Christians, under the lacerating effects of the tortures to which so many of the brethren had recently been subjected, by pointing them to the approaching close of the æon, and the nearer and ever nearer coming of the Lord to judge the old world and to inaugurate the last of earthly dispensations.

Apocalyptic literature differs essentially from prophetic literature. It shrouds the events of the present in symbols, and by means of the same symbols conveys its hopes and expectations of the future. It was the favourite form of prophetic-poetic literature during this epoch, which furnishes us with many Apocalypses similar in general scope

<sup>1</sup> Iren. *Adv. Hæř.* v. 30; and *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Epiphani. *Hær.* li.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. xi. 1-13.

<sup>4</sup> Dionys. Alex. *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* vii. 25.



to the Revelation of St. John, though incomparably inferior to it in power and splendour. Such are, among others, the book of Enoch, the books of Esdras, the Vision of Baruch, and the Sibylline Oracles. The language of them all is more or less founded on that of Daniel and Zechariah, and we find in them essentially the same symbolic combinations and modes of viewing the events of the present and of the imminent future, which we find in the Apocalypse of St. John. It has been usual to regard this book as a great silent sphinx, lying at the outer gate of the inspired volume, and propounding a riddle which no man yet has ever solved. "No competent, and at the same time unprejudiced judge," says Blomfield, "will deny that, after all the labour bestowed on its explanation, no book of the New Testament has so defied all attempts to settle its interpretation." "My readers will not expect," said Dr. Adam Clarke, "that I should either give a decided preference to some one of the opinions sketched above, or produce one of my own. I can do neither; nor can I pretend to explain this book; I do not understand it." "*Mihi*," said Gravina, "*tota Apocalypsis valde obscura videtur et talis cujus explicatio citra periculum vix queat tentari.*" It is doubtless this supposed impossibility of arriving at a satisfactory explanation which has caused so many critics and exegetes either to speak slightly of this book, as uncanonical and uninspired, or to give it up as a book beyond our powers of investigation, and one which has been so deeply discredited by the often preposterous and indefinitely varying schemes of interpreters, as to be beyond the range of sane exegetes. What can the ordinary reader make of a book in which scores of commentators have professed to find a minute history of eighteen Christian centuries, but in the application of which hardly any two original commentators are even approximately agreed?

In spite of the discredit into which the interpretation of

the book has consequently fallen, I believe that the Apocalypse, if explained on the analogy of all other Apocalyptic literature, and if taken to be what it professes to be by its very form and symbolism, is, in its essential particulars and its main outlines, a book perfectly easy to understand; and I venture to predict that, before another half-century has elapsed, such will be the unanimous view of the Christian world. There are two entirely different phases under which it may be regarded: the one as abounding in Divine lessons of warning and consolation, expressed in images of such beauty that they have in all ages thrilled the hearts and passed into the common phraseology of Christians; the other, as a book of symbols which shadow forth contemporary perils and expectations, and which are mainly valuable—not for those subordinate details which belong only to the form of the book, not to its spirit—but for the general principles which these symbols involve as illustrating the tendency of the Divine government of the world.

Now *the key* to the understanding of no small part of this symbolic history is furnished by the Seer to all of his readers who were familiar with Jewish apocalyptics, so plainly that it would have been impossible, for *them*, at least, to mistake his meaning. The Jewish-Christian communities for whom the book was mainly intended, reading it at the terrible epoch of extreme peril and tense expectation in which it reached their hands, would naturally expect to find in it some shadowing forth of the circumstances which now filled their minds, and some indication of the manner in which they were to regard them. An Apocalypse of the seventh decade after Christ which did not depict the character and position of Nero, would have been to them most strange and disappointing. At the same time they would understand, from the very form of the book, that they could only find a cryptograph.

No danger incurred by the early Christians was greater than that caused by the universal prevalence of spies ; and if any one of these wretches got possession of any Christian writing which could be construed into an attack or reflection upon their terrible persecutor, hundreds might be involved in ruthless punishment on the charge of high treason (*laesa majestas*), which was then the most formidable engine of despotic power. St. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, had found it necessary to speak of the Roman empire and of the Emperors Claudius or Nero in terms of studied enigma. St. Peter, making a casual allusion to Rome, had been obliged to veil it under the mystic name of Babylon. We find a similar method of allusion again and again in the Talmud, where, for instance, the Romans constantly figure as Idumæans, and where the Emperor Caligula is called Armillus because of the bracelets (*armillæ*) which he had the folly to wear in public. St. John saw in Nero a realization of Antichrist, just as the precursor of Antichrist in the days of Daniel had been Antiochus Epiphanes. But it would have been fatal, perhaps to whole communities, possibly even to the entire Church, if the Apostle had openly committed to writing either the indication of Nero's character or the prophecy of his doom. He could only do this by means of Scriptural and prophetic images, which would read like meaningless nonsense to Gentiles, but of which, as he was well aware, the secret significance was in the hands of the readers for whom alone his Revelation was intended.

Accordingly it is not too much to say that St. John has neglected no single means by which he could, with any safety, indicate that by the Wild Beast<sup>1</sup> of the 13th Chapter he means the Heathen, but especially the Roman, world-

<sup>1</sup> The confusion caused in our version by the indiscriminate use of "Beast" to represent alike the Heavenly Immortalities (ζῶα), and the demonic Wild Beasts (θῆρμα) is most unfortunate.

power as centralized and personified in Nero. It rises from the sea, by which is perhaps indicated not only a Western power, and therefore, to a Jew, a power beyond the sea,<sup>1</sup> but, perhaps especially one connected with the sea-washed peninsula of Italy.<sup>2</sup> It is a Beast like one of Daniel's four Beasts, but a compound of those. Daniel's four Beasts were the Chaldean lion, the Median bear, the Persian panther, and the Beast of Greek dominion, of which the ten horns represent the ten successors of Alexander,<sup>3</sup> and the little horn represents Antiochus Epiphanes. St. John's Beast being the all-comprehensive Roman power, is a combination of Daniel's Beasts. It is a panther, with bear's feet, and a lion's mouth. It has seven heads,<sup>4</sup> which indicate (in the apparently arbitrary but perfectly normal interchanges of Jewish apocalyptic symbolism) both the seven hills of Rome, and seven kings.<sup>5</sup> The Beast is a symbol interchangeably of the Roman empire and of the Emperor. In fact to a greater degree than at any period of history the two were one. The Roman Emperor could say, with literal truth, "*L'État c'est moi.*" And a Wild Beast was a Jew's natural symbol either for a Pagan kingdom, or for its autocrat. When St. Paul was delivered from Nero, or his representative, he says quite naturally that "he was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (2 Tim. iv. 17; comp. Heb. xi. 33). When he is alluding to his struggles with the mob and their leaders at Ephesus, he describes it as "fighting with wild beasts" (1 Cor. xv. 32). When Marsyas announced to Agrippa I. the death of Tiberius, he did so in the words, "the *lion* is dead."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the Sibylline Oracles (iii. 176) the beast rises "from the Western sea."

<sup>2</sup> Such is the not improbable conjecture of Ewald. From xvii. 15 we might explain it of "the peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues," over which Rome ruled.

<sup>3</sup> The Diadochi, as they were called.

<sup>4</sup> Comp. Orac. Sibyll., iii. 176, where also the many-headed beast is Rome.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. xvii. 9, 10.

<sup>6</sup> Jos. Ant. xviii. 6. § 10.

Princes, as well as kingdoms, had been described under the same symbol by the Old Testament prophets.<sup>1</sup> Esther, in the Jewish legends, was said to have spoken of Xerxes as "the lion." But, besides all these reasons which made the symbol so easily intelligible, Renan may be right in conjecturing that there was yet another. It was that, on an occasion which was exceptionally infamous even for Nero, he had been *disguised as a wild beast*, and in that disguise had been let loose from a cage, and personated the furies of a tiger or panther.<sup>2</sup> Yet this Wild Beast of Heathen Power has ten horns, which possibly represent the ten main provinces of Imperial Rome.<sup>3</sup> It has the power of the dragon, that is, it possesses the Satanic dominion of the "prince of the power of the air." On its heads are names of blasphemy. Every one of the seven "kings," however counted, had borne the (to Jewish ears) blasphemous surname of Augustus ("one to be venerated"); had received apotheosis, and been spoken of as Divus after his death; had been honoured with statues, adorned with divine attributes; had been saluted with divine titles, and in some instances had been absolutely worshipped, and that in his lifetime, with temples and flamens—especially in the Asiatic provinces. The diadems are on the horns, because the Roman Proconsuls enjoy no little share of the Cæsarean splendour; but the names of blasphemy are only on the heads because the Emperor alone receives divine honour. One of the heads is wounded to death,<sup>4</sup> but the deadly wound is healed. If there could be any doubt that this indicates the violent end, and universally expected return of Nero, or—which is the same thing for prophetic purposes—of one like him, that doubt seems to be removed by the parallel description

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xix. 1-9.

<sup>2</sup> *L'Antechrist*, p. 175. Suet. *Ner.* 29.

<sup>3</sup> Ten horns as in Dan. vii. 24. There they are the Diadochi; here the provinces of Italy, Achaia, Asia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, Spain, Gaul, Britain. (Renan, *L'Antechrist*, p. 13.)

<sup>4</sup> Just as the eagle's head (Nero) in 2 Esdras.



of the 17th Chapter, where we are told that of the seven kings of the mystic Babylon, five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come, and "the Beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven." Can language be more apparently perplexing? Yet its solution is obvious. No explanation worth the name has ever been offered of this enigma except that which makes it turn on the widespread expectation that Nero was either not really dead, or that, even if dead, he would in some strange way return. The five kings are Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius (Caligula), Claudius, and Nero. Since the Seer is writing in the reign of Galba, the fifth king (Nero) was, and is not; Otho, the seventh king, was not yet come. When he came he was to reign for a short time, and then was to come the eighth, who, it was expected, would be Nero again, one of the previous seven, and so both the fifth and the eighth. Since Rome is the great city (xvii. 18), and the ten horns its provincial governors—"kings who had received no kingdom as yet" (xvii. 12),—it seems difficult even to imagine any other explanation of symbols which it is quite clear that the Apostle *meant* to be understood, and which he assumed *would* be understood, since otherwise they would have been useless to his readers. But, after he has thus all but told us in so many words whom he means, the Seer continues the hints by which he describes the characteristics of the Beast. He says that "*all the land wondered after the Beast.*" The best comment on that particular may be found in the description of Tacitus of the manner in which all Rome, from its proudest senators down to its humblest artisans, poured forth along the public ways to receive with acclamations the guilty wretch who was returning from Campania with his hands red with his murdered mother's blood.<sup>1</sup> That the world "*worshipped*

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 13. Dion Cass. lxi. 16. Suet. *Ner.* 39.

the dragon, who gave his power to the Beast," would be a natural Jewish way of indicating his belief that the Pagan world, when it offered holocausts for its Emperor, was adoring devils for deities.<sup>1</sup> The cries of the world, "*Who is like unto the Beast? who is able to make war with him?*" sound like an echo of the shouts "Victories Olympic! victories Pythian! Nero the Hercules! Nero Apollo! Saved one! The One of the Æon," i.e., unparalleled in all the world! with which Dion Cassius tells us that he was greeted by the myriads of the populace, when, with the crowns of his 1800 artistic triumphs, he returned from his insane and degraded perambulation of Greece. "*The mouth speaking great things and blasphemies*" is the mouth which was incessantly uttering the most monstrous boasts and pretensions,<sup>2</sup> declaring that no one before himself had the least conception of what things an Emperor might do, and of the lengths to which he could go; the mouth which ordered the erection of his own colossus, 120 feet high, adorned with the insignia and attributes of the Sun.<sup>3</sup> As for his blasphemies, Suetonius tells us that he was "religionum usquequaque contemptor."<sup>4</sup> "*Power was given him to act*<sup>5</sup> *forty-two months.*" The exact significance of this mystic number, which is also described as 1260 days (xi. 2; xii. 6), and as "a time, times, and half a time" (xii. 14), is variously explained. The simplest explanation is that it refers to the time which elapsed between the beginning of Nero's

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. x. 20.

<sup>2</sup> The "mouth speaking great things" of Antiochus Epiphanes, in Dan. vii. 8, 20, never uttered half such monstrous boasts as that of Nero.

<sup>3</sup> Pliny, *H.N.* xxxix. 7. Suet. *Ner.* 30-32. Dion Cass. lxi. 15. Mart. *Spectac.* ii. 1. Ep. i. 71. It required twenty-four elephants to drag it away in the reign of Hadrian. Spart. *Hadr.* 19.

<sup>4</sup> Nero. 56. The first object of his veneration was the Syrian goddess, "hanc mox ita spreuit ut urinâ contaminaret."

<sup>5</sup> xiii. 5. *ποιῆσαι*, can hardly mean "to continue" as in the English version. It must mean "to act," "to do what he will;" and, if so, the addition of ὁ θεὸς in N is at least a correct gloss.

persecution in Nov., 64, and his death in June, 68, which is almost exactly three and a half years. "*It was given him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them,*" for it was he who began the terrible era of martyrdom, and put "a vast multitude" to death with hideous tortures on a false accusation.<sup>1</sup> "*Power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.*" Of the representatives of the world-powers in that day, Greece received him with frantic adulation, and Armenia, in the person of Tiridates, laid its diadem before his feet.<sup>2</sup> Even Herod the Great was accustomed to talk of the "Almighty Romans." All "*the inhabitants of the earth, except the followers of the Lamb, worshipped him;*" for at this dreadful period the cult of the Emperor was almost the only sincere worship which still existed.<sup>3</sup> Then follow two verses (xiii. 9, 10) which do not bear directly upon the symbol, being either a prophecy of retribution, given for the consolation of the suffering saints,<sup>4</sup> or, if we take what seems on the whole to be the more probable reading, a declaration that they must indeed suffer but that they should do so in faith and patience.<sup>5</sup>

In this paragraph then we have fourteen or fifteen hints as to who and what is intended by the Apocalyptic Wild Beast, and every one of these directly points to Rome and Nero. They point so directly to Rome and to Nero that it is difficult to conceive how the writer could have expressed his meaning less enigmatically, if he adopted at all that well-understood literary method of Jewish Apocalypses which was enigmatical in its very nature. The most

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. xv. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. Ann. xiv. 26. Suet. Ner. 13.

<sup>3</sup> See Boissier, *La Religion Romaine*, i. 122-208. Augustus disliked all personal worship, and insisted that his cult should be joined to that of Rome. But Caligula claimed to be worshipped in person (Suet. Cal. 21), and Nero received *apotheosis* in his lifetime. Tac. Ann. xv. 74.

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps an allusion to Nero's supposed death and flight.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. xiii. 10.

remarkable indication that Nero is mainly intended, is that it is exactly in the *most* enigmatical particulars that the resemblance is most close. He was mortally wounded, and yet (according to the then belief) the wound was *healed*; and he was a fifth king who was, and is not, and yet (so St. John indicates him by the popular belief) should be once more the eighth king, and one of the seven.<sup>1</sup> If we had not the perfectly simple clue to what was indicated by this strangely riddling description, we might give up the interpretation as insoluble; but the clue is preserved for us, not only by Jewish writers,<sup>2</sup> and Pagan historians and authors, such as Tacitus,<sup>3</sup> Suetonius,<sup>4</sup> Dion Cassius,<sup>5</sup> and Dion Chrysostom<sup>6</sup>; but also by St. Irenæus,<sup>7</sup> Lactantius,<sup>8</sup> Sulpicius Severus,<sup>9</sup> and the Sibylline books;<sup>10</sup> and even by St. Jerome<sup>11</sup> and by St. Augustine.<sup>12</sup> Nothing can prove more decisively than this that for four centuries many in the Christian world identified Nero with the Beast. It would have been strange that the Christian world should still have felt any doubt upon the subject, if all history did not shew the extent to which dogmatic bias—not *seeking* truth in Scripture, but going to Scripture in order to find

<sup>1</sup> It was specially believed that he would return from the *East*, by the aid of Parthians, among he was thought to have taken refuge,

<sup>2</sup> The Talmudic tract Gittin, quoted by Grätz, *Gesch. d. Judenth.* vol. iv. p. 203.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Hist.* ii. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 57, et ibi Casaubon.

<sup>5</sup> Dion Cass. See Zonaras, *Ann.* xi. 15–18. The expectation was most current in Asia Minor, and Nero's thoughts were incessantly turned to the East by astrologers, etc. Tac. *Hist.* ii. 95; *Ann.* xv. 36. Suet. *Ner.* 40–47.

<sup>6</sup> Dion Chrysost. *Orat.* xxi. p. 314.

<sup>7</sup> Iren. *l.c.*

<sup>8</sup> Lactant. *De Mort. Persec.* 2.

<sup>9</sup> Sulp. Sever. *Hist. Sac.* ii. 28. "It is the current opinion of many that he is yet to come as Antichrist." This was written A.D. 403.

<sup>10</sup> *Sibyll.* v. 33; viii. 71.

<sup>11</sup> Jer. *In Dan.* xi. 28.

<sup>12</sup> Aug. *De Civ. Dei*, xx. 19, 3.

there its own ready made convictions—has dominated for centuries over simple and straightforward exegesis. But as though to exclude *any possibility of doubt* about the matter, St. John, after all these clear indications, has all but told us in express words the name of the man whom he means by his Antichrist and Wild Beast; by this deified yet slain and to be resuscitated murderer of the saints. He does so in the last verses of the Chapter.

“Here is wisdom,” he says (Chap. xiii. 18); or, as he expresses it in Chapter xvii. 9, “wisdom is needed to grasp the meaning of my symbol;” or, perhaps, as Ewald understands it, “this is the sense,—whoever has wisdom will understand it thus.” “Let him that hath understanding count the number of the Beast; for it is the number of a man.” In other words, he tells us that he now intends to *indicate numerically* the name which he dared not actually express. A Jew or Jewish Christian would at once be aware that he now intends to give an instance of one of the forms of that Kabbalistic method, of which traces are found even in the ancient prophets, and which was known to the Rabbis as *Gematria*, i.e., Geometry, or the numerical indication of names. Gentile Christians were not so familiar with this method;<sup>1</sup> but we see from Irenæus that they would easily have got the clue from their Judaic brethren,

<sup>1</sup> It was, however, by no means unknown to educated Greeks under the name of *isopsephia*. For instance, they called verses *isopsephics* when their letters made up numerically the same sum. In the Anthology we find an epigram which begins—

“One, hearing the words Demagoras and Plague (Loimos), which are of equal numerical value”—

which he could test in a moment, since, in Greek letters, Demagoras is—

$$\begin{array}{cccccccc} 4 & + & 1 & + & 40 & + & 1 & + & 3 & + & 70 & + & 100 & + & 1 & + & 50 & = & 270 \\ \Delta & A & M & A & \Gamma & O & P & A & N \end{array}$$

and Loimos (Plague) is—

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} 30 & + & 70 & + & 10 & + & 40 & + & 70 & + & 50 & = & 270 \\ A & O & I & M & O & N \end{array}$$

There are isopsephic inscriptions in the *Corpus Inscr. Græc.*, 3544–3546.

See Aul. Gell. xiv. 14.



whom the Apocalypse has mainly in view. There was not much danger of their betraying a secret which might cost their lives to themselves and the whole community. What St. John says in effect is: "I shall now give you the name of the Wild Beast in its *numerical value*. You have heard many specimens of this method, so that you can easily apply it, though I warn you that it may give you some difficulty." He evidently *intended* them to find out the number of the Beast, which was also the number of a man, while he pointed out that there was *one* element of exceptional difficulty in this particular solution. If it had been merely a name in the numerical value of its *Greek* letters, there would have been so little difficulty about it that any ordinarily educated reader might have discovered it after a few trials. He would only have to find out what living men there were who had the dozen or more attributes which the seer had given to the Beast, and whose names, counted by the value of the letters, made up the number 666. As there was scarcely *any* other living person to whom the Apocalyptic description could apply, Nero's was probably the first name which a Jewish Christian reader would have tried. And here he would have been at once baffled. In Greek letters he would have found that *Nerōn* made  $13 + 5 + 17 + 24 + 13$ , which only gives 72. If he tried *Neron Kaisar*, it would only make  $72 + 56 = 128$ . Almost every combination which he tried would fail, and very possibly he would give up the task in despair, with the thought that he did not possess the requisite "wisdom," though he may have solved many such problems in Sibylline or similar books. Thus, in the Sibylline books, the poet indicates the name Jesus, in Greek *Ἰησοῦς*, by saying that it is a word which has 4 vowels and 2 consonants, and that the whole number is equivalent to 8 units, 8 tens, 8 hundreds, *i.e.*, 888 (*Ἰησοῦς* =  $10 + 8 + 200 + 70 + 400 + 200 = 888$ ), and no Greek-

speaking Christian would have had any trouble in solving the riddle. Since, however, all the other indications pointed so clearly to Rome and Nero, the Greek Christian reader might very naturally have hit upon "Latinus" (*Λατῆρος*) as a sort of general indication of Rome and "a Latin man." This accounts for the prevalence of this explanation among the Fathers, beginning with St. Irenæus, who may have heard it from St. Polycarp, who had seen St. John in his old age.<sup>1</sup> These early Christian writers were, so to speak, on the right scent; yet with "Latinus" they could hardly have been quite satisfied. It is a vague adjective, and the names *Latium* and *Latinus* had long been practically obsolete. If this were indeed the solution, they might have put down its vagueness to intentional obscurity. We can hardly conceive what care a foreign writer had to take if he touched in any respect unfavourably upon the imperial power in those days of *delators* and *laesa majestas*.<sup>2</sup> Josephus was in high favour, first with Poppæa and then with the Flavian dynasty, yet he stops abruptly in his explanation of the prophecies of Daniel, with a mysterious hint that he does not deem it prudent to say more.<sup>3</sup> This evidently was because he feared that, if he touched on any explanation of the work of destruction wrought by the "stone cut without hands," he might seem to be threatening future ruin and extinction to the Roman empire; and this was beyond his very limited daring. It was perhaps the complete unsatisfactoriness of the solution "*Lateinos*" which made some Christians, as Irenæus further tells us, try the name *Teitan*, which also gives the mystic number 666 ( $Teitan = 300 + 5 + 10 + 300 + 1 + 50 = 666$ ), and which has the additional advantage of

<sup>1</sup> Iren. *Adv. Hær.* v. 30. Hyppolit. *De Christo*, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> See Tac. *Ann.* iii. 38; iv. 50; *Hist.* i. 77. Suet. *Ner.* 32:—"tum ut lege majestatis, facta dictaque omnia, quibus modo delator non deesset, tenerentur."

<sup>3</sup> Jos. *Ant.* x. 10, § 4: "Daniel did also declare the meaning of the stone to the king; but I do not think proper to relate it."

being a word of six letters. In this instance also ingenuity was not very far astray; for Titan was one of the old poetic names of the Sun, and the Sun was the deity whose attributes Nero most affected, as all the world was able to judge from seeing his colossus with radiated head, of which the substructure of the base still remains close by the ruins of the Coliseum.

On the whole, however, the Greek Christians must have remained a little perplexed, a little dissatisfied; and must have been inclined to say, with some of the Fathers,<sup>1</sup> that only time could reveal the secret, or else to believe that perhaps there was more than one solution. They must, however, have known what was *meant*, even if the exact equi-numeration of any words which they could hit upon did not quite satisfy them. And this was the general condition in which the secret remained in the early Christian Church. At any rate there stood the strange number before them.

χξς'

The very look of it was awful. The first letter was the initial letter of the name of Christ. The last letter was the first double letter of the cross. Between the two the Serpent stood confessed in sign and sound.<sup>2</sup> The whole formed a triple repetition of 6, the essential number of toil and imperfection; and this numerical symbol of the Anti-christ, 666, stood in terrible opposition to the 888—three perfect 8's of the name of Jesus.

But Jewish readers and, as we have said, it was to Jewish readers that the Apocalypse was primarily addressed, would find none of the difficulties which perplexed their Gentile fellow-Christians. The Apostle had warned them that the solution did not lie so much on the surface as was

<sup>1</sup> Irenæus, v. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. xii. 9; xx. 2.

usual in similar enigmas. Every Jewish reader, of course, saw that by the Beast Nero was meant. He would not try the name Nero Cæsar in Latin, because *isopsephia* (which the Jew called *Gematria*) was almost unknown among the Romans, and their alphabetic numeration was wholly defective. He might try *Νερων Καϊσαρ* in Greek, but it would not give him the right number. Then, as with a flash of intuition, it would occur to him to try the name *in Hebrew*. The Apostle was writing as a Hebrew, was evidently thinking as a Hebrew.<sup>1</sup> His solœcistic Greek was sufficient to prove that the language was unfamiliar to him, and that all persons of whom he thought would be naturally presented to his mind primarily by their Hebrew designations. This, too, would be an additional safeguard from the prying inquisition of treacherous Pagan informers. It would have been to the last degree perilous to make the secret *too* clear. Accordingly the Jewish Christian would have tried the name as he *thought* of the name—that is *in Hebrew letters*. And the moment that he did this the secret stood revealed. No Jew ever thought of Nero except as “*Neron Kesar*,” and this gives at once—

$$\text{נרון קסר} = 50 + 200 + 6 + 50 + 100 + 60 + 200 = 666.^2$$

The Jews were remarkable for reticence, and men are specially liable to keep their secrets to themselves when they involve matters of life and death. Many methods and secrets of Rabbinic exegesis, though of great value, have remained unrevealed by Jews to Christians, simply because

<sup>1</sup> See the startling Hebraism in the Greek of Rev. i. 4, and comp. Rev. ix. 11.

<sup>2</sup> The name was so written in Jewish inscriptions. See Ewald, *Die jehann. Schriften*, ii. 203; Buxtorf, *Lex. Rabbin. s. v.* The secret has been almost simultaneously re-discovered of late years by Fritzsche in Halle, by Benary in Berlin, by Reuss in Strasbourg, and by Hitzig in Heidelberg. See Bleek, *Vorlesungen*, 292 ff.; Krenkel, *Der Apostel Johannes*, 88; Volkmar, *Offenbarung*, 18 and 214.

the haughty and jealous exclusiveness and prejudice of that singular race—feelings which it must be confessed have been due in no small degree to the brutality of their enemies—make them indifferent to the views of others. It is therefore by no means remarkable that the Asiatic Judaists, who first read St. John's Apocalypse, did not betray what they must have easily recognized to be the name corresponding with the number of the Beast. Enough, however, may have escaped them to put others in the right direction, and, as far as the *general* understanding of the Apostle's meaning was concerned, it mattered very little whether the guessed solution was *Lateinos*, or *Teitan*, or *Nero Kesar*, since all three words were but other forms of the same essential thing.

If any confirmation could possibly be wanting to this conclusion, we find it in the curious fact recorded by Irenæus, that, in some copies, he found the reading 616. Now this change can hardly be due to *carelessness*. The letters  $\chi\xi\varsigma'$  were so singular, even in their external form, that no one could have been likely to alter them into  $\chi\iota\varsigma'$  or 616.<sup>1</sup> But if the above solution be correct, this remarkable and ancient variation is at once explained and accounted for. A Jewish Christian, trying his Hebrew solution, which would (as he knew) defend the interpretation from dangerous Gentiles, may have been puzzled by the *n* in *Neron Kesar*. Although the name was so written in Hebrew, he knew that to Romans, and Gentiles generally, the name was always *Nero Cæsar*, not *Neron*. But *Nero Kesar* in Hebrew, omitting the final *n*, gave 616 not 666; and he may have altered the reading because he imagined that, in an unimportant particular, it made the solution more suitable and easy.

One objection will at once be made to this solution. *Nero*, it will be said, never did return. The belief in his

<sup>1</sup> ἐξήκοντα δέκα ἑξ is the reading of the Codex Ephraemi.



return, though it shewed an obstinate vitality, was a mere chimera. St. John could not have enshrined in his Apocalypse what turned out to be but a popular mistake.

Such an objection is entitled to respect, and I have no space to give it the full answer which it deserves. All that I can now say is that this belief about Nero's return *did* prevail in the Christian, no less than in the Pagan, world. In the Pagan world it led to the success of more than one false Nero. In the Christian world it originated a belief which was still existent three centuries later, that Nero would return in person as the future Antichrist. The vividness of the contemporary belief must be measured by its extraordinary permanence.

But we have no right to frame our interpretation of Scripture by our *a priori* theories respecting the character and limits of its inspiration. Our duty is to discover its interpretation, and to be guided by this to the true theory of its claims. When we study the meaning of a passage we must try fairly to get at the meaning, and not repudiate that meaning in obedience to *a priori* convictions.

In reality, however, this question is not one which in any way affects the dignity of revelation. St. John uses the common belief, as he might have used any other contemporary fact, or any contemporary but erroneous scientific conception, to help him in the elaboration of his symbol, and to enable him to point out the person whom he is describing. The mere arrangement of the symbolism affects in no wise the truth of the great *principles* which he reveals. The Divine hopes and consolations of which the Apocalypse is full, the priceless lessons in which it abounds, are not in the slightest degree affected by the circumstance that he depicts the Neronian Wild Beast in the colours which every other historian, whether secular or sacred, would have used to describe him.

It should also be observed that the Apocalyptic method

differs wholly from the Prophetic, and appears to stand—if the expression may be used—upon a lower level of predictive insight, as though it sprang from a less intense degree of inspiration.

Yet even if this detail of Nero's personal return had been meant to be in any way essential to the general prediction, it cannot be said that it has in any way failed. Although Nero had not (as was popularly supposed) taken refuge among the Parthians, and never was restored by their aid, as was the common expectation of that day, yet this record of the actual Nero belongs in no way to the essence of the Apocalypse. Every successive Antichrist has shewn the Neronian characteristics. If the prophecy of the return of Elijah the Prophet was adequately fulfilled in the ministry of John the Baptist, the prophecy of the returning Nero was adequately fulfilled in Domitian, in Decius, in Diocletian, in many a subsequent persecutor of the saints of God.

If these considerations are not satisfactory to those Christians who hold the mechanical and superstitious theory of verbal dictation, they must at least account for the unmistakable clearness with which Nero is pointed out; they must furnish an even approximately satisfactory explanation of the number of the Beast; they must give some other clue to the meaning of the Apocalyptic symbolism which can command the assent of criticism at its present stage; they must account for the fact that recent exegesis has only *revived* the theory which was suggested by a Father who had talked with a pupil of St. John. Of all the books of the Bible, there is not one which, in spite of strong external evidence, has been received with so much hesitation and doubt as this. Not to speak of the doubts of Gaius the Presbyter, of Dionysius of Alexandria, of Eusebius,<sup>1</sup> and of the remarkable omission of the book from

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 39.

the Peshito-Syriac, Luther never withdrew his remark, that "for many reasons he regarded the book as neither Apostolic nor Prophetic."<sup>1</sup> Probably, as we may judge from his own remarks, this unwarrantable judgment arose from a deficient acquaintance with the necessary characteristics of the Apocalyptic style. Zwingle also "did not regard the book as Biblical," and Ecolampadius, Bucer, and Carlstadt, shared his doubts. I regard the book as both Apostolic and Prophetic, and it abounds in chapters inestimably precious. No discovery of its real immediate significance—which the Seer himself announces at the very opening—will obliterate the meaning of its wider import in those prophecies which, like all true prophecies, have "springing and germinant developments." Nothing but the true solution can put an end to the scandal of endless conjectural schemes of interpretation, each more arbitrary and baseless than the last, and none of them commanding more than the most partial and temporary assent. It is these fantastic attempts to wrest the meaning of the book, for purposes of Protestant or Roman Catholic controversy, which have made so many Christians regard it as an insoluble enigma, and even speak of it in terms of positive disrespect. We shall not lose our reverence for it, nay, it will acquire a fresh and intense interest, when once we understand what was its real primary meaning, and when we bear in mind that allegory is only susceptible of allegorical explanation.

FREDERIC W. FARRAR.

<sup>1</sup> *Preface of 1522.*

## THE HISTORICAL CHRIST OF ST. PAUL.

### II. THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

1 CORINTHIANS i. 2, 26.—It has been a favourite averment since the days of Bolingbroke that St. Paul is the founder of Christian theology. The contrast is repeatedly drawn between the simple practical precepts addressed to the fishermen of Galilee, and the abstruse Platonic philosophy which pervades the Pauline treatises. We are told that the Christ of early Christendom was to the mind of that Christendom altogether dissociated from theology, that his memory was revered simply as a great teacher of morals, whose greatness mainly consisted in the adaptability of his teaching to the common wants of commonplace men. Christianity, in fact, was but a vivified Judaism, and its Founder but an advanced prophet. A very important question comes to be, Is this true as a matter of history? St. Paul is certainly a Christian theologian: is he the founder of Christian theology? is his theological view of Christ radically different from the prevailing view of his time? If we were permitted to assume the genuineness of the first Epistle of St. Peter, it would set the matter at rest. The Christ of that Epistle is essentially a theological conception; and were it proved to be the conception of a man who is commonly regarded as St. Paul's adversary, it would demonstrate an unity of faith in the early Church. We dare not, however, take for granted the genuineness of St. Peter's Epistle; and we are constrained to look elsewhere for an answer. We turn to St. Paul himself, to see if we can discover any evidence of the theological sentiments of that age to which he wrote. On the very threshold of his first Epistle to the Church of Corinth, we are arrested by the fact that the Apostle is addressing men whom, in spite of seemingly irreconcilable differences, he believes to be

bound together by a faith in something more fundamental than their differences. That Church, as we learn from this Epistle, had been rent asunder by various sects; there was a party of Paul, a party of Apollos, a party of Peter, and a Messianic sect calling themselves the party of Christ. St. Paul is quite aware of the fact, and makes it abundantly evident throughout his writings how important he holds the differences to be. But what we have to observe is that, important as he holds them to be, he is not afraid to regard the men who display them as the members of a common church of God, whom he can address in a common Christian Epistle; he considers their point of union far more vital than their points of disagreement. That point of union is a purely theological article, the worship of the Founder of Christianity; for St. Paul thus expresses the one unity in the many diversities: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth . . . with all that in every place *call upon the name* of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours."

It cannot be said that St. Paul is the founder of *this* theology; he makes it the distinctive creed of a Church which, by his own admission, numbers amongst its members those who hold religious opinions diametrically opposite to his. We find, then, within little more than twenty years after the death of the Christian Founder, that his followers, divided widely as the poles on many points, were at one on a great theological dogma, the calling on Christ's Name in the act of worship. It may be said, indeed, that even in five and twenty years there was time for Christianity to transform itself from the religion of humble fishermen and tax-gatherers into the religion of Platonists and Stoics, time for it to gather votaries from the ranks of the metaphysical and the learned. The answer is furnished by Verse 26 of this same Chapter, where it is distinctly affirmed that the Christian votaries of St. Paul's day were selected from the



valleys of the earth: "See your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." The theological teaching of St. Paul was, by his own [admission, addressed to primitive and uncultured men. He was far too acute a man, and far too versatile in his powers of adaptation, to have adopted any such course if he had been conscious that he was adopting it for the first time. He must have known well that these primitive men, by their very profession of Christianity, had entered into a theological atmosphere. The fact that a man of such penetrating intellect ventured to address a company of peasants and labourers in language which demanded and presupposed a power of theological understanding, and that too little more than twenty years after the departure of the Christian Founder, is itself an incontrovertible proof that the belief in that Founder had from the earliest times been associated with some form of theological thought.

Let us here remark, by the way, that in this Verse 26 we have a confirmation of the view made familiar to us by our Gospels, that Christianity *did* begin with primitive men. Without the testimony of St. Paul, and on the supposition that our Gospels date from the second century, we should have no evidence in the world that Christianity had not begun with the aristocracy, unless indeed such evidence be found in the testimony of the catacombs. As it is, we have a narrative of the life of the Christian Founder which is permeated throughout by the idea that his teaching is addressed to the child-life of humanity. He Himself is made to exclaim with rapture: "I thank Thee, O Father, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." He is made to take a little child in his arms as the distinctive symbol of his coming kingdom, to promise that kingdom to the poor in spirit, to offer his "rest" to the labouring and heavy laden. He is represented as recognizing an antagonism between

the love of worldly possessions and the love of that Father whom He professed to reveal; and therefore He speaks of worldly possessions as men speak of things which involve danger. He calls his disciples from the lower ranks of life. It is not, indeed, a rule without exception; there are here and there indications that Christianity is adapted to the mountains as well as to the valleys. We have the Nicodemus of St. John, the Arimathean Joseph of St. Matthew, and the "most excellent Theophilus" who figures in the dedication of St. Luke. But these are rather prophetic than representative men; they point to future possibilities of the Gospel; they do not yet indicate its present social strength. That strength is everywhere represented as weak, composed of men whom the Master addresses as a "little flock," and recruited from the highways and the hedges of life; it is the *common people* who hear Him gladly.

Now this is precisely the picture which St. Paul draws. It is the picture of a religion making its way up from the valleys, and gathering within its pale chiefly the dwellers in those valleys. It is, indeed, not implied that Christianity had made no converts amongst the wise and rich and noble of this world; the phrase "*not many*" indicates beyond doubt that some such converts had been made. But here, as in our Gospels, the calls of the rich and noble are the exception, not the rule. The religion of the Christian Founder makes its most powerful appeal to the child-life of humanity, and exerts its most powerful influence over those whom the world had not favoured.

1 *Corinthians* ii. 8.—"Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." There are two distinct points in this passage. The first is the enunciation of the mode of Christ's death, crucifixion. The reader may be disposed to say. Who ever doubted it? No one, certainly; but it is

this very fact which, in our view, gives it an apologetic importance. It has often occurred to us that the doctrine of the crucifixion has made a narrow escape from the mythical theory. An orthodox Christian derives his knowledge of that doctrine from three sources; from our four Gospels, including the Acts; from one or two scanty references in classical writers; and from the New Testament Epistles. The negative school puts the four Gospels out of court by making them fabrications of the second century, and, in its most destructive form, makes the New Testament Epistles, with four exceptions, later forgeries of the first century. Now let us suppose that all classical reference to the mode of Christ's death had been omitted, and that the four acknowledged Pauline Epistles had been silent as to the fact of the Crucifixion: would there not have been a strong temptation on the part of the negative critics to account for the idea of the cross in Christianity on a purely mythical principle? It is curious to reflect how easily this particular doctrine would have lent itself to the system of Strauss, and how plausibly it would have fitted in with a theory which explained everything by the growth of poetic imaginations. We should have found the school of Tübingen expressing itself somewhat like this: "It is not difficult to trace the process by which the thought of a crucified Christ became crystallized into a historical fact. From the days of Plato downward there had been a close and constant association between the idea of the perfect man and the idea of the cross. Plato himself had declared that the perfect man, whenever he should come, would be of all men the most reviled; he would appear throughout life to be unjust even while he was just; though doing no wrong, he would have the greatest reputation for wrong doing; he would be scourged; last of all, after suffering every kind of evil, he would be crucified. The Greek philosopher having here skilfully joined together the extremes of life,

and having associated the thought of perfection with the idea of a slave's death, what more natural than that such an association should be perpetuated? The conquests of Alexander, having blended the Greeks and Jews, produced an amalgamation between Judaism and Platonism. The search for a legal perfection had all along been a distinctively Jewish element; and the life of the Christian Founder, persecuted and sorrowful as it was, had seemed to supply such an ideal: was it not to be expected that, in connecting their ideal of perfection with the admitted fact of a sad life prematurely closed, the mind of Platonized Judaism should fasten upon that symbol of the cross which Plato had already ennobled by association with the perfect man?"

We have given this imaginary quotation simply to shew how easily the most undoubted fact in the world could have had the belief in it accounted for on other grounds than its truth. We pass, now, to the second apologetic point in the passage before us. St. Paul declares, not only that Christ was crucified, but that He was crucified under the form of a state prosecution. His life was taken away, not in a tumultuary rising of the people, but under the semblance of legal enactment, authorized by the existing powers of government, "the princes of this world." He goes on to state further that the state prosecution was dictated by a mistaken view of the Christian Founder's object, that, had the princes of this world "known" the real state of the case, they would not have authorized the prosecution. Let us examine this for a few moments.

In the preceding Verses St. Paul has been maintaining that his preaching among the Corinthians had been distinguished by its unworldliness. It had avoided all the methods of rhetorical expediency, had eschewed enticing speech and the appeal to motives of worldly wisdom. It had, however, employed a wisdom of its own; and the remembrance of the fact leads St. Paul to contrast the maxims of expediency

with the wisdom of God. The peculiarity of the latter he declares to be its hiddenness, its mysteriousness, its inwardness; it is altogether unlike the policy of kings, because the wisdom of the princes of this world aims exclusively at outward dominion. And here St. Paul cannot but remark how utterly these princes mistook the nature of the heavenly wisdom when they gave their consent to the Crucifixion. They thought that the Messiah claimed to be a prince of their own order; whereas He claimed to be a Prince of peace, to subjugate by subduing the *soul*. If the worldly princes had comprehended the hidden and unobtrusive nature of this Messianic plan of government, they would never have experienced the slightest fear in the presence of the Christian Founder; and in their freedom from fear they would have allowed Him to pursue his way; they would not have "crucified the Lord of glory" had they known that his was a celestial glory.

This, we are convinced, is St. Paul's meaning; without such a train of thought we cannot see why "the princes" should have been introduced at all in such a connection. But, taking this as his meaning, one cannot but remark how beautifully it fits in with our ordinary conception of the historical Christ. We see from our Gospels that the Son of Man was rejected alike by the people and by the princes; but the motive for which He was rejected by the people was the opposite of the motive for which He was rejected by the princes. The people rejected Him because his kingdom was not of this world, because He refused to receive the hosannas of the Messianic Son of David; the princes condemned Him because they feared that his kingdom might be too much of this world, and might endanger the stability of Judaic or Roman dominion. Therefore it is that in our Gospels the beginning and the end of his personal manifestation are signalized by opposition from the civil powers; his birth is disturbed by the persecutions of Herod; his



death is hastened by the suspicions of Pilate ; and the very epitaph written in mockery above his cross attests that the princes of this world mistook the nature of his glory. If this Gospel history was not the history which St. Paul knew, he must have known one which exhibited precisely the same principles and revealed precisely the same elements of human nature. Whatever may be said of the identity of individual facts and names, this at least is clear, that the allusion of the Apostle in this passage presupposes the existence and the knowledge of a history whose facts and whose actions point to an identical moral. With such a conviction in view, there is created for our Gospel history a very strong preliminary bias, a bias which grows not out of prejudice, but is itself the product of fact. If the Gospel history which St. Paul knew illustrates the same principle which is taught in our Gospels, it will require very strong evidence indeed to shake our conviction that the historical incidents of St. Paul were identical with those with which we are now familiar.

1 *Corinthians* iv. 5, 17.—In Verse 17 we have almost the direct statement of a principle which we have already shewn to be involved in St. Paul's teaching, and shall hereafter shew still more plainly. The point to which we refer lies in the words : " Who shall bring you into remembrance of *my ways which be in Christ*, as I teach everywhere in every church." St. Paul here declares that the substance of his teaching to every church was what he believed to be the Christian revelation : " my ways in Christ." He does not profess to have any ways out of Christ, or, in other words, to teach authoritatively any doctrine which rests merely upon his conviction as an individual ; whatever he utters, he believes himself to utter as the mouthpiece of the Christian Founder. The result is that many things in St. Paul's writings, which seem to be purely didactic,

presuppose the knowledge of a Gospel history. Let us take, as a specimen, his views on the last judgment, to which we have access in Verse 5 of this same Chapter.

He says in that passage, "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts." The first thing which strikes us here is his command to suspend judgment. At a time of religious enthusiasm, and in a sphere so marked by seemingly vital religious differences as the Church of Corinth was, such a command was very bold, and would not have been given by St. Paul unless he had believed himself to have warrant for it. He would find such warrant in the words of St. Matthew (vii. 1), provided the Christian Founder spoke those words. And as in St. Matthew vii. 1 the deprecation of human judgment is associated with the imminence of Divine judgment, so is it here; he says, "Judge nothing *until the Lord come.*" Observe how incidental is the reference to the second coming of Christ; it is not stated, but assumed as something which every Christian had reason to expect. Whence this assumption on the part of St. Paul? whence this expectation on the part of his contemporaries? Not, clearly, from the promises of the Old Testament; for the Old Testament only speaks of one coming. The expectation must have been derived from the belief that the Christian Founder had promised to return. In our Gospels, even in that which is farthest removed from millenarianism, such a promise is given (St. John xiv. 3). It is declared in St. Matthew (x. 26) that the hidden glory of Christ shall give place to a time of revelation, when there shall be nothing hidden which shall not be manifested, and when the words now spoken in the ear shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. So here St. Paul connects the second coming with the age of manifestation: "*until He come who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness.*" With St.

Paul the manifestation is itself the judgment. This appears yet more clearly in 2 Corinthians v. 10: "We must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Whence does the Apostle derive this conception of a coming Messianic judgment seat? The natural impulse would be to answer, from the prophetic kingdom of Daniel. If St. Paul had been still a Jew sitting at the feet of Gamaliel, that answer would have been amply sufficient; but St. Paul was a Christian of a very pronounced, that is to say, a very anti-Judaic type, who magnified exceedingly what we now call the first coming of the Son of Man, and who held distinctly that in that coming the prophetic kingdom of Daniel had already been set up, that kingdom which we have heard him, in a previous Section, declare to be "not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." The truth is that, for a Christian of the first century, and particularly for a Pauline Christian, the Old Testament prophecies could only continue to be prophetic by being renewed. With his strong tendency to spiritualize the Hebrew Scriptures, St. Paul would have had no difficulty whatever in believing that the ancient prophetic visions of Messianic glory had all been fulfilled in the incarnate life of the Son of Man. He did not hold this; and the question is, why? It was surely a violent process on the part of one who believed in the inspiration of the Old Testament to thrust into that Testament what he must have known not to be there, the doctrine of two Messianic advents. *Did* he thrust it into the Old Testament? Must he not rather have been drawing upon what he believed to be a subsequent revelation? Was there such a subsequent revelation? If we believe our Gospel history, there was. In St. Matthew (xxv. 31) the Christian Founder is represented as predicting that He would come again in an

attitude of revealed majesty, and on a mission of Divine judgment. All nations would be gathered before Him, and He would indicate to every soul its moral place in the universe of being; He would set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on his left. If that were a historical fact, and if St. Paul knew it to be a fact, he would have had from his point of view an ample warrant for his great expectation. At all events we are entitled to say that the expectation in which he indulged admits of no explanation so rational as the existence of some such historical tradition as our Gospels have handed down.

Let us now turn to 1 Corinthians vi. 2, that we may see the same subject from another angle. In that Verse we find these words, "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" "Know ye not?" the Apostle appeals to an experience outside his own, clearly shewing that the doctrine which he enunciates is not a mythical or subjective growth of his own mind, but something which is already the possession of the Church. What is that doctrine? Viewed in the light of St. Paul's previous sentiments, it is a statement startling enough. He has already exalted the Messiah to the pinnacle of absolute dominion, by placing Him on the seat of universal judgment; here, almost immediately afterwards, he seems to take away with his left hand that majesty which he has conceded with his right. If the saints also are to sit on the judgment seat, where is the pre-eminence of the Son of Man? Of course, from our standpoint of Christian experience, we all understand what St. Paul meant; he meant that the members of Christ's body would be sharers in the Messianic reign, and in the Messianic power of discernment. But the question is, How have we reached, how has Paul himself reached, this standpoint of Christian experience? He never obtained it from heathendom; for saints had there no kingdom. He never obtained it from Judaism; for to the Jew the thought

of a man, however holy, sitting with God on the throne of the universe would have been blasphemous in the extreme. Everything was against the possibility of a mythical origin for this idea in the mind of the Apostle; and yet it was in his mind. Where did he get it? what was his warrant for it? Once again we are bound to state that, if we accept the testimony of our Gospels, such a warrant can be found. If we believe with St. Matthew (xix. 28), and St. Luke (xxii. 30), that the Christian Founder promised his disciples the privilege of sitting on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, if we believe in the promise uttered to the sons of Zebedee that such a privilege would be granted to all those whose hearts the Father had prepared for it, whatever meaning we may or may not attach to the words in question, we shall at least be able to understand how a Christian Apostle, of a spirit habitually humble, should have felt himself warranted to say, without contradicting his humility, "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?"

1 *Corinthians* v. 4, 5.—"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus." Our difficulty in the treatment of this passage is to avoid the temptation to interpret it subjectively. Were we writing a homily, such a course would be as easy as it would be necessary. But our province here is limited to the work of the apologist; and such a work demands a strictly historical mental attitude. We wish, therefore, as much as possible to disregard metaphysical subtleties, and to try if, by an effort of intellectual sympathy, we can throw ourselves back into the thoughts and beliefs of the primitive Christian age. In the passage before us we have, in the first instance, a sentence of excommunication which the Apostle claims the power to



pronounce, through an authority delegated to him by the Christian Founder. If we admit the statement of our Gospels that, whatsoever the apostles bound on earth was to be bound in heaven, and whatsoever they loosed on earth was to be loosed in heaven, we shall find a warrant for St. Paul's claim (St. Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18, 20). But the passage contains something more than a sentence of excommunication; it clearly points to the infliction of some positive pain. That pain is defined in the remarkable words, "delivered unto Satan." Have we any clue to the meaning of this expression? Is there anything resembling it with which we have been made familiar by our present Gospels? It seems to us that there is one, and only one, such thought; the idea which has come down to us by the name of demoniacal possession.

There are three points which clearly reveal themselves in relation to this primitive belief as it is manifested in the New Testament. First, it was the popular opinion that evil spirits, or demons, were permitted at times to enter into the bodies of human beings; the demoniacal possession consisted, therefore, in a *bodily* or *physical* empire of Satan. Second, the demons only entered the body because sin had already possessed the soul; the demoniacal possession bore therefore the character of a penal infliction. Third, when the demons entered the body, they produced upon that body a destroying or lacerating influence; the demoniacal possession was therefore a destruction of the flesh; it bred disease.

Now these three elements will be found united in the present passage; but, in addition to them, there will be found a fourth, and for the most part a new, element. St. Paul declares that the purpose of the suffering inflicted by the delivery unto Satan is, ultimately, not penal but remedial; its design is exorcism; it aims at casting out the evil spirit; the destruction of the flesh is only instrumental to

the salvation of the soul. The flesh was regarded as the seat of lustful desires; and therefore the crucifixion of the flesh was looked upon as the emancipation of the spirit from these desires. Satan is here made to play the part of an unconscious Divine emissary; he casts out himself. Now is there any principle on which we could explain this transmutation in the idea of the Gospels, on the supposition that the delivery unto Satan was identical with the demoniacal possession of a former generation? We think there is such a principle. It has been often pointed out that, in the change from one religion to another, the gods of the old faith become the demons of the new; and it is highly probable that in the popular opinion the evil spirits of the primitive Christian age were held to be those very deities whom the past age had worshipped. But there was this difference between Christianity and all other religions, that it was essentially an eclectic faith; it sought to transmute foreign and adverse agencies into voluntary or involuntary emissaries. Satan himself was not, as in Parseeism, a power independent of God; he was at any time capable of being made an involuntary messenger of God. Was it not natural that the demoniacal possession which, in the first Christian generation, was looked upon as the unqualified antagonist of the Divine Life, should, in the second, be regarded as unconsciously working out, by its very power of fleshly destructiveness, a new birth of spiritual being? We may remark that, in our opinion, the same transmutation is observable in the salvation by fire of 1 Corinthians iii. 15; the Gehenna of the later Judaism is at least allowed to suggest the idea of a fire whose office, like that of the third person of the Brahmanical trinity, is to destroy in order that he may recreate. We believe that, on this principle, the new attitude of Satan's work, in relation to the Divine Kingdom, can be vindicated consistently with the admission of its identity with the older view of demoniacal possession.

Nor are we by any means sure that the germ of such a transformation is not to be found in the Gospels themselves. Physical suffering is there regarded as essentially a Satanic work, Christ speaks of an afflicted woman as one "whom Satan hath bound." And yet there are not wanting indications that physical suffering itself will prove remedial, that Satan will be defeated by his own weapons. We are told that one species of demons "goeth not out but by prayer and *fasting*"; and this last word, pointing as it does to an attenuation of the flesh, brings us very near the Pauline idea. We are told if our eye offend us to pluck it out, and if our hand offend us to cut it off; we are told of a baptism by fire, and that "every one shall be salted with fire." In the third Gospel especially, which approaches most nearly to the Pauline type, we are made to feel that, in the opinion of the Evangelist at least, there is an advantage in the endurance of physical sorrow; and we are prepared for such a revelation as we receive from the lips of St. Paul, that the delivery unto Satan may issue in the salvation of the soul.

If our solution of this problem be accepted, we shall have in the Pauline Epistles a direct reference to the largest and most frequent class of the miracles recorded in our Gospels. It is, apologetically, a matter of indifference to us whether the suffering which St. Paul professes to inflict were produced by natural or by supernatural means. If it be held that it was simply of the nature of Catholic penance, we shall not, for the purposes of this inquiry, oppose the view. The apologetic point is that, in whatever way the suffering was produced, it was believed by St. Paul to have a supernatural effect, the effect indeed of *changing* the nature. It was a process of exorcism, instituted *in the name of Christ*, and believed to be conducted *by the power of Christ*; and nothing is more certain than that, in the eye of the Apostle, he was doing a work so momentous as to be a sign of his Apostolic mission. He labours to tell the Church

of Corinth that, when they assemble for this solemn act, his spirit will be in the midst of them. Without, however, pressing the acceptance of this solution in all its details, we shall simply ask the reader to arrive at this conclusion: that in the days of St. Paul there was practised in the Church of Corinth a species of ecclesiastical discipline which had in view the exorcism of evil, and which powerfully reminds us of some of those phenomena which our Gospels have associated with the cure of demoniacal possession.

1 *Corinthians* vii. 7, 10.—We begin with Verse 10, as it is the key of the position. “And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, let not the wife depart from her husband.” The Apostle is here directing the Corinthian Church in relation to a definite and specific point of morals. It is a point on which any man might be expected to have an individual opinion, because it relates to practical life, and is in no sense concerned with transcendental beliefs. Nevertheless, St. Paul distinctly declares that his ethical decision on this point must be based upon the mandate of the Christian Founder; that the morality which He teaches must be not a Pauline, but a distinctly Christian, morality: “*I command, yet not I, but the Lord.*” It may be said, admitting this fact, how does it follow that St. Paul derived this command from the utterance of the Christ of history? may it not have been something which he believed to have been communicated to him in one of those ecstatic visions to which he was so subject? We shall peril this and all such questions upon the result of a future Section, upon what in legal phraseology may be called a test case, the institution of the Sacrament of Communion. If we shall find in that Section that St. Paul is referring to matters of actual history, we shall be warranted in seeking a historical basis for all those things which he professes to “have received of the Lord”; if we shall find, on the contrary,

that the matters there treated of have no historical basis, we shall be warranted in concluding that the whole structure of the Pauline morality was derived by him from supposed communion with a Christ who was transcendental and unhistorical.

In the meantime, however, and in relation to the passage immediately before us, there is one highly pertinent question: Have we, in our historical Gospels, any record of such a command as is here imputed to the Christian Founder? If we had none, it would by no means follow, in this instance, that the Christ of Paul was unhistorical; for the command might have been derived from some oral tradition which has not been incorporated in any Gospel, and of whose echoes there is no trace beyond the Apostle's testimony. Here, however, we are in no such difficulty; we can point to a command in our Gospels which might well have furnished the Apostle's warrant. The irrefragable nature of the marriage tie is expressed in St. Matthew v. 32, with a single qualification, and is repeated without qualification in St. Mark x. 12. We feel that the Apostle, in this instance at least, is on the lines of sober and authentic history.

And we are confirmed in this persuasion when we fall back on Verse 7 of this Chapter: "For I would that all men were even as I myself; but every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that." In spite of every attempt to refine away the passage there can, we think, be no doubt that St. Paul means to say: "I wish that all men were unmarried." There is every reason to believe that he cherished the hope of a speedy advent, a hope which might well have had its ground in a too historical interpretation of the promise that the first generation should not pass until the Christian consummation were fulfilled. But apart altogether from this question, he felt, as he himself tells us, that the age in which he lived



was a time of distress in which a man would best support his burden by being free from family cares. On these grounds St. Paul had no scruple in indicating, at this juncture, his preference of the unmarried to the married state. Yet he will not indicate more than a preference, he refuses to issue a command; and in this reticence it is reasonable to suppose he was sustained by some precept believed to have been uttered by the historical Christ. His language is very peculiar, that is to say, it is so on the supposition that no such precept had been uttered; he declares the ability to abstain from marriage to be a *gift*. We know the high place assigned to gifts in the primitive Christian Church: is it not rather a bold stroke of the Apostle to rank amidst them so seemingly trivial a power? We do not think he would have done so on his own responsibility; he must have thought he had warrant for it. If our Gospels be true, he had such a warrant and a warrant signed in almost identical terms.<sup>1</sup> In St. Matthew xix. 11, when the disciples declare that the irrefragable nature of the marriage tie makes marriage undesirable, the Christian Founder is represented as having answered: "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is *given*." Here we have the very thought<sup>2</sup> of the Pauline Epistle; the ability to abstain from marriage is spoken of as something which is *given*; notwithstanding its secular sphere, notwithstanding its seeming commonplaceness, it is placed on a level with those powers and capacities which are supposed to be the direct emanations of the Divine Spirit; and the language of the Apostle becomes intelligible when it can point to a precedent in the language of the Master.

1 *Corinthians* viii. 12.—"But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, *ye sin against*

<sup>1</sup> We mean as to idea; the Greek in each is quite different.

<sup>2</sup> The words rendered "given" and "gifts," though from different roots, both imply the descent of Divine influence.

*Christ.*" Here is another of those bold sayings so frequent in the writings of St. Paul. The frequency, indeed, tends to make us forget the boldness. We are so accustomed to a Christian atmosphere that we find it very difficult to put ourselves in the place of those outside of such an atmosphere, or to understand how paradoxical the promulgation of Christian sentiments must have sounded to them. In this passage St. Paul virtually identifies the life of the humblest believer with the life of that Being whom he worshipped as Divine. The sentiment must have produced upon the adherents of the Jewish theocracy an effect precisely similar to that which the pantheistic utterances of Mr. Emerson are apt to produce upon a Calvinist; precisely similar in kind, but much more intense in degree. For it must be remembered that the most rigid Calvinist of the nineteenth century is mild in his aversion to Pantheism in comparison with the adherent of the Jewish theocracy; the very essence of Judaism was the transcendence and the incommunicableness of God. It must be remembered also that this doctrine of Divine incommunicableness was still held by a large number even of professing Christians; the Christ of many was as yet only the Messiah after the flesh. The Christ of St. Paul was not such a Messiah; He was declared to be the very Son of God. But, in addition to this doctrine, which had at least its verbal parallels in the Old Testament, St. Paul proclaimed another which the Jew must have found it very difficult to receive; it was the communication of the Divine Sonship to the Messiah's followers. He held that the essential life of Christ had passed into the life of the meanest Christian believer, so that what was affirmed of the one might fitly be predicated of the other. In the Verse immediately under consideration he expresses this identity in rather striking terms; to wound a Christian of weak conscience is declared to be an injury inflicted on the person of the Christian Founder. A weak

conscience is a purely personal experience ; it is something which belongs to a man in special circumstances. Is it not somewhat startling in St. Paul to say that a wound which strikes a man in the special point which constitutes his weakness should be felt by the Divine life as an insult offered to its own strength ? Surely this must have been one of the statements which the Apostle believed himself warranted to make by Divine command.

But if we turn to St. Matthew xxv. 40, and if we accept that passage as an authentic utterance of the historical Christ, the paradox of St. Paul's language will altogether vanish. Christ is there represented as sitting in the attitude of a King on the judgment throne of the universe, and apportioning rewards and punishments according to the deeds of men. These deeds of men are purely personal and historical acts, such as feeding the hungry and visiting the captive, or neglecting to feed and visit them. Yet Christ here puts Himself in the place of the weak ones who had been in need of succour. He appropriates to Himself the hunger, the thirst, the nakedness, the isolation, the captivity. He says that in relieving these, men had relieved Him ; that in refusing to relieve these, they had refused to relieve Him : " Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me." In that Gospel which is of all others the most Judaic, the most theocratic, the farthest removed from the Pantheistic element, we are confronted by a statement in full accord with the Pauline view, and professedly uttered by the great Head of the theocracy. If the authenticity of that statement be admitted, we shall see even in our most Judaic Gospel the germ of Pauline Christianity ; it is in the attitude of kingship that Christ there appropriates the weakness of humanity ; and it is in the attitude of headship that St. Paul claims for Christ a participation in the wounds of the body.

G. MATHESON.

## THE PLACE AND FUNCTION OF THE LAMP.

ST. MARK iv. 21-25; ST. MATTHEW x. 26, 27; ST. LUKE  
viii. 16-18; xii. 1-3.

### II. THE PARADOX.

THE picturesque little Parable of the Lamp is based on a generalization as broad and significant as any that ever fell even from the lips of Christ. The truth conveyed by the Parable itself is, as we have seen, that just as no lamp is lit only that it may burn, and, still less, only that it may burn in secret, so no man is illuminated for his own sake alone, but in order that he may let his light shine before men, in order that he may impart to them the truth which he himself has received from Heaven. And this truth, so wide in its scope, so generous in its tone, He forthwith proceeds to base on a truth still wider and more generous. "*For,*" He argues, "*nothing is hid except that it may be made manifest, neither was anything kept secret except that it should come abroad*": that is to say, There is now absolutely no light or truth veiled from men which it is not the intention and purpose of God to uncover and reveal to them as soon as they are able to receive it; nor was there ever, at any time, anything hidden from them which it was not for their good to hide from them for the time, and which was not disclosed to them so soon as it was for their good that the disclosure should be made.

It is impossible to glance at such words as these without being impressed by their breadth and fulness of meaning; but we shall best learn perhaps how much they cover and convey if we trace this great saying through the four several connections in which it was used by our Lord Himself, view it in the various lights in which it was placed by Him, and so arrive at the principle He intended it to enforce.

We take it, first, as it is reported by St. Mark (Chapter iv. Verse 22). And here, as we have seen, it stands between a proverb which calls special attention to it, and the parable which affirms that men are taught as lamps are lit, viz. that they may shine, that they may teach what and as they have been taught. Taken in this connection, it is evident that by this paradox He commands and invites us to a frank and liberal utterance of any and every truth we know by the example of God Himself, who, whether in the natural or in the spiritual world, hides nothing from us that we are able to receive, withholds nothing that we are able to use; nay, never has concealed or withheld anything from us save with the express intention of revealing and conferring it upon us so soon as it would be for our good to know or to have it. In short, we are to be frank and generous, because our Father in heaven is frank and generous, just as we are to be perfect because He is perfect.

So far the immediate context carries us. But even St. Mark places this great axiom in other connections, and asks us to look at it from other points of view. If, for instance, we turn back to the earlier verses of the Chapter, we learn that our Lord had just uttered the parable of the Sower who went forth to sow; and that no sooner was He alone with his disciples than they asked Him why He was adopting this parabolic method with the multitude; why, instead of speaking to the people plainly as He spake to *them*, He spoke in parables which concealed the truths He taught. His answer to that question seems so utterly alien to "the mind of Christ" that it perplexes and distresses us to this day: "Unto *you* it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to *them* I speak in parables that, seeing, they may see and not perceive, and, hearing, they may hear and not understand, lest at any time they should be converted and their sins should be forgiven



them." Possibly we shall never grasp all that these strange words involve; but take them in connection with our Parable and Paradox, as we are bound to do, and all that distresses us in them, if not all that perplexes us, immediately disappears. For when Christ says, "Doth the lamp come to be put under the bushel or under the couch, and not to be set on the lampstand?" it is the light in *his parables* which He has in view; and what He asks of the disciples is virtually: "Do you suppose that *this* lamp has been kindled only that it may be hid? Nay, but rather it has been kindled that it may give light to all who are in the house, and even that it may shine ruddily through door and window, and invite all who are without to enter in." And when He declares that, in the intention and purpose of God, "nothing is hidden except that it may be manifested," his words are so full of teaching and comfort and promise that I cannot hope to convey the half of what even I can see in them. But they cannot mean less, they must mean more, very much more, than this: (1) that the disciples have been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom in order that they may teach them to the multitude; (2) that the truths of that kingdom are only hidden from any man by his own inability to see them, and until he is able to see them; and (3) that sooner or later, these truths in all their illuminating and saving power must be made known to every soul of man. If absolutely *nothing*, no truth of God, is hidden "except that it may be manifested," why then it *must* be manifested some day; and if nothing, no grace of God, is withheld for a time "except that it may come abroad," why then it *must* come abroad before all is done. All that we *can* see, therefore, we *may* see; all that we can find out, we may find out; and what as yet we can neither see nor find out is only hidden from us for a while, hidden by the infirmities and limitations of our own nature, and is destined by the will of God Him-

self to manifest itself to us as the eyes of the soul grow larger, keener, stronger.

And is not that a truth which liberates our Lord's answer to his disciples from all that really distresses us in it? What it comes to, as interpreted by the passage before us, is simply this: If nothing is hid except that it may be manifested, if God kindles no lamp except that it may shine, if what the disciples have heard in secret that they are to proclaim from the housetops, then *they* have been given to know the mystery of the Kingdom in order that they may teach that mystery to all men; the Parable has been explained to them that they may explain it to the people; the truth has been hidden for a while from those who were not able to receive it, only to whet their curiosity and stimulate them to research, only that, as soon as they can receive it, it may be revealed unto them also.

This I take to be the general principle of the passage, as St. Mark lays it down; and we must now mark how he applies it, or rather how he represents our Lord as applying it in the Verses which follow it. In the very next Verse we find a proverb: "If any man have ears to hear, let him hear," which reminds us that capacity involves responsibility, that what we *can* do we *ought* to do: hear, if we can hear; see, if we can see; speak, if we can speak; and so on, through the whole range of our powers.

Why our Lord selects *hearing*, rather than seeing or speaking for instance, as the illustrative capacity becomes obvious as we pass on to Verse 24. For here we learn that what our Lord wished specially to impress on his disciples at the moment was the duty of wise hearing, of *Christian* hearing; *i.e.*, the duty of listening to what He said *for the sake of others* as well as for their own sake. They were to *hear* well that they might *teach* well, that they might proclaim from the housetop the secrets of truth and grace which were whispered into their ears when they

were alone with Him. They were listening for the world, as well as for themselves. And this duty of hearing well in order that they might teach well is enforced upon them by two general principles which would well repay careful study, but on which we can only throw a glance in passing.

The first general principle our Lord lays down is this: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you." The principle is true in a thousand different ways, in all the complex relations of human life; but it is cited here mainly as a basis, a reason, for wise and right hearing of the truth; mainly to teach that the measure of attention we give to truth will be the very measure in which truth will be meted out to us; that in proportion as we listen and attend, we shall learn, learning more the more attentively we listen. In Verse 25 a second general principle is brought to bear on this selfsame duty: "To him that hath (hath an open and attentive ear, for example) more shall be given; while from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away." That is to say, we lose the very faculty of attention if we fail to use it, and gain that faculty, gain force and quickness for it, in proportion as we use it. Of course both these axioms or general principles have a multitude of applications; they are true all round, through the whole circle of our experience. But they are brought in here mainly to illustrate *the law of hearing*, to teach the disciples of Christ with what attention they are to listen to the Master's words, since they are listening not for their own instruction alone, but also and chiefly that they may teach to others the truths which they have learned from Him. The more they are able to learn, the more He will be able to teach them; the more they can take, the more He can give. And it should be their ambition, as it should be ours, to learn and to take as much as they can, because they them-

selves may need hereafter truths of which they do not feel their need now, and because the world will very certainly need all that they can teach it.

In St. Matthew x. 26 we have another version of this great saying; and here the law of Christian *teaching* is illustrated and enforced, instead of, as in St. Mark, the law of Christian hearing. The Lord warns his disciples that they are not to suffer any fear of man to hinder or impede them in the free and frank proclamation of the truths they have learned from Him. And He nerves them to meet the oppositions of men in the words: "*Fear not them, therefore: for there is nothing covered that shall not be uncovered, and nothing hid that shall not be known.*" Here is our general principle again. Here once more Christ fires us with courage and with hope by affirming, in the most absolute and unlimited terms, that there is positively *nothing*—nothing anywhere, nothing either in the natural or in the spiritual universe—covered from us that shall not be uncovered to us, nothing hidden from us which we shall not one day know; no secret of science, no mystery of providence, no gift of grace. Not a single condition is made, not a single limitation imposed. Because God is our Father, all that He has is ours; and as He has all things, *all* things are ours—ours in right even now already, ours in fact so soon as we are able to administer and enjoy the vast inheritance.

But in the next Verse (ver. 27) our Lord makes a particular application of this general principle, derives from it a law which is to rule all our teaching: "Whatsoever I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and whatsoever ye hear (spoken) into the ear, that proclaim ye upon the house-tops." Now we know what the method of Christ's teaching was to which He alludes in these words. Parables and dark sayings, whispered hints and suggestions, axioms of an immeasurable depth and breadth, maxims and manysided

proverbs capable of an infinite variety of applications, were among the forms by which He led his disciples to a knowledge of the truth. And now He tells them that what they thus learned, as it were in darkness and in secret, they were to teach openly, freely, boldly, to all. If they did, those who persecuted Him would no doubt persecute them. *That*, however, was to make no difference, to impose no check on them as teachers and ambassadors of the truth. At most their enemies and the enemies of the truth could but kill the body. After that there was no more that they could do. And what did *that* matter? what harm could that do them? All things and all men were pressing on to a day of universal manifestation. The time was coming when everything would be seen in its true light, stripped of all disguises, and every man be known for what he was. "Your enemies will be unmasked, and so will you. Their true character will be exposed to view, and so will yours. Live and speak, then, as in the light of that day. Be open, frank, fearless. Teach all you know, even that which is most inward and secret. Hold nothing in reserve, even of that which is most unwelcome to those to whom you speak. And have no fear as to the result. Leave that to time, and to Him who shapes it to a perfect end. All that is covered must and will be uncovered; all that is secret must and will be disclosed. And hence all that lies in your choice is, not what and how much truth shall come abroad, but whether or not *you* will be of those who teach the truth and publish its secrets to the general ear."

Such seems to be the meaning and application of this great principle as it stands in St. Matthew's Gospel. While St. Mark gives a law for the Christian hearer, St. Matthew gives a law for the Christian teacher; both laws being derived from the same large and fundamental axiom.

But this law of Christian teaching comes out still more strongly in the Gospel of St. Luke. Indeed he inculcates



both the lessons we have just learned, that of St. Matthew and that of St. Mark. In St. Luke viii. 16-18 we have a close parallel to the words we have already studied in St. Mark. In Verse 16 the parable of the Lamp is repeated. It is followed in Verse 17 by the Paradox with which we are now concerned. And in Verse 18 we have the very warning or admonition given in St. Mark, "Take heed how ye hear," backed up by an appeal to the same general principle: "To him that hath shall be given; from him that hath not shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have." Here then is the very warning we have already heard, the warning to *hear* wisely and attentively, to grasp and possess ourselves of what truth we have within our reach, on the express ground that we cultivate a faculty by using it, and lose it in proportion as we suffer it to "rust in us unused."

And if we turn over a few pages, and glance at Chapter xii. Verse 2, of the same Gospel, we find that very law of Christian *teaching* which we have heard from St. Matthew, but laid down here in terms still more forcible and imperative. The disciples are to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees (Verse 1), one element of whose hypocrisy it was to withhold from the common people the light of their own better knowledge; neither going into the kingdom of heaven themselves, nor suffering those who would have entered to go in. The disciples, unlike the Pharisees, are not to withhold any light which they possess; for God intends nothing to be concealed from any man. Whatever *is* covered is to be uncovered. Whatever is hidden from us is hidden, not by God, but by the limitations of our own faculty, and will be disclosed as we train our faculty of perception and outgrow its limitations. So far as we *can* see we *may* see; and what we see not yet we shall see soon. Yes, and, as we are expressly taught in Verse 3, so far as we can see we may *speak*, and even *must* speak. For as it is the will of God that nothing should be covered

except that it may be uncovered, so also it is the will of Christ that whatever He or his disciples have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light, whatever they have spoken in the chamber shall be proclaimed from the housetop. The same rule is to govern *their* words which governed *his* words. What He had taught them privately, that they were to teach openly (St. Matthew x. 27) ; and now He adds that whatever *they* taught privately, that their successors were to teach openly. They were to have no mysteries, no "œconomy," no truths reserved for the initiated. To attempt to hide any truth they had mastered, or to confine it to the knowledge of the few, was to fight against God, whose aim it was that all things should become open and naked to men even as all are naked and open to Him.

O, it is a great word, a principle of the broadest and most generous scope ! For it declares that, in the intention of God, no truth, no hope, has ever been concealed from men for any other purpose than that they might have the honour and joy of discovering it ; it declares it to be his will and intention that all the darknesses by which we are oppressed should be dispelled, every secret told, every problem solved, every mystery at once explained and justified ; and it bids us withhold from our fellows no light which we have received from Him, on the express ground that He wishes to pour light into every darkness and to make plain whatever is concealed. So far as we shrink from seeing any new truth therefore, or from recognizing old truths in new and larger forms, we are making void the gracious purpose of God, violating the Christian law of learning, and are running the risk of losing even what knowledge of truth we have. And, on the other hand, if we do not teach what and all we know ; if we hold certain truths to be " dangerous " to our fellows, though not to ourselves ; if we seek to suppress any honest and sincere utterance, we are setting ourselves against

the authority of Christ, and flagrantly violating the law of Him who has bidden all who have learned of Him to proclaim publicly and freely even the most secret and private lessons He has taught them. We, too, are running a dreadful risk: for He Himself has warned us that with the very measure we mete out his truth to others, that truth shall be meted out to us; so that, by refusing to teach any truth we know, we shut truth out from our minds. All truth is for all men; for nothing is hidden except that it may be manifested, nothing covered except that it may be uncovered, nothing kept secret except that it may be published abroad.

We should wrong so great and absolute a saying, however, were we to limit its application to the study and ministry of the inspired Word. It is absolutely without limits as it fell from the lips of Christ, and the three or four applications of it at which we have already glanced are not intended to exclude other applications, or any application of it that can be fairly made. They are but specimens of the mode in which we are to use and apply the general principle which proved so potent on the lips of Christ. What it means in the last resort, and when taken at the full, is, that in the will and intention of God *all things are for all men*, and all men for one another. Nothing is to be hidden or withheld from any one of us when once God has trained us to receive, use, and enjoy the knowledge or the gift we crave; no secret of nature, no problem of providence, no possibility of virtue even the finest and most heroic, no attainment of grace even the last and highest. *All* that is covered is to be uncovered, all that perplexes us made clear, all that we value and strive for attained.

It is obviously impossible to touch even on all the points suggested by so large an interpretation of so large a saying. But there are one or two points on which it bears with

markable and opportune force; and on these a few words may be advanced. Clearly, then, we have in this axiom and paradox (1) the very charter of science; (2) a warrant for all honest inquiry; and (3) a solid ground for hope.

(1) In the long controversy between science and religion it is hard to say which of the combatants, who never should have been aught but friends, has been the more to blame. On the one hand, we all know how piercing an outcry has been raised by sincerely good men against the discoveries, or assumed discoveries, of science, especially when those discoveries have militated against their traditional interpretations of Scripture. Not content with making a stand for these interpretations in the very teeth of reason, they have condemned scientific investigation into the secrets of nature as wicked in itself, and denounced those who pursued it as enemies of the Christian faith. But on the other hand, men of science, whose boast it is to search into facts and examine them for themselves, have too often and too hastily assumed that the Christian faith is responsible both for the traditional interpretations thrust upon it and for the follies and blunders of some of its adherents; than which it would be no whit more unreasonable to infer the real motion of the sun from its apparent motion, or to assume that the alchemists of the Middle Ages were the true representatives of science.

Now had the men of theology on the one hand, and the men of science on the other, gone to Christ Himself for their conceptions of his teaching, these grievous mistakes would have been simply impossible. This great saying would of itself have rendered them impossible. For here is the very charter of science: "*There is nothing hid except that it may be manifested; nor was anything (ever) kept secret except that it might come abroad.*" To those who will take a law from Christ's lips nothing more than this can be necessary

to justify every kind of investigation into the secrets and mysteries of the universe. For in so many words it throws open the whole universe to research, and even stimulates research by predicting its ultimate success.

The simple fact is that God has hidden nothing, and desires to hide nothing, from us. The secrets of nature are, or have been, secrets only because of the inevitable limitations under which the human intellect has worked and continues to work. The old strange story of Moses and his veil, and St. Paul's striking use of it in his letter to the Corinthians,<sup>1</sup> may be taken as a case in point. When Moses came down from the mount of fellowship, with the law in his hand, a divine lustre sat on his brow, which lustre he had to veil. Why? Because either Jehovah or he himself wanted to hide it from the men of Israel? Not at all, replies the Apostle; but because *they* could not endure to look upon it. And even to this day, he continues, when the Jews read the law that came by Moses, a veil hangs between the law and them. But the veil is not on the law; nor is it woven by God. It is on their own hearts, and has been woven by their own hands. Even yet they cannot bear the full brightness of the Divine will, or are not willing to recognize its true and full meaning, lest it should condemn the narrow formularies and traditional interpretations to which they cleave.

Now a like veil is on *our* hearts as we contemplate the natural universe. We are so made and so limited that we must see the phenomena, and mistake them for realities before we can penetrate to the laws and forces which lie behind them. We are so made and so limited that even when we apprehend the laws and forces at work behind this great Show of things, we can only apprehend them in part, only advance and enlarge our conceptions of them by long years of toilsome thought, and must always confess that

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 7-18.



behind all we know there lies an infinite unknown. Till *we* are what we ought to be, we shall never know things as they are in themselves. Till we touch our ideal and reach our full stature as men in the Perfect Man, we must look out on the world as through a glass darkly, and speak of what we see with a childish simplicity and imperfection. We are but children of a larger growth; and so long as man is a child he must speak as a child, understand as a child, and think as a child. Not till we are perfect men in Christ Jesus shall we put off childish things, and know even as also we are known,—know as He knows, speak as He speaks.

When, therefore, we complain of the limitations of our knowledge, and of the insoluble mysteries by which we are encompassed, we are like children who want to be men; and what we really complain of is that God has made the universe so vast, so rich, and has called us to so noble an inheritance, that we cannot survey and comprehend it at a glance. And when we set ourselves against any real discovery of science, or reject any true conclusion it has reached, we are unfaithful to the law of Christ, who has taught us to expect the discovery and manifestation of that which once was hidden from us, and untrue to God who is thus calling us to go up and possess ourselves of part of our great inheritance: we are like children who love childish things too well to put them away, and to assume the tasks, honours, and responsibilities of men. And when, because others, who should know better, tell us that we ought to be content with such imperfect knowledge as we have, and not seek to discover aught that lies beyond our present range, we assume *that* to be the will of God or the law of Christ, we are like children who gather their impressions from their schoolfellows and playmates, instead of going to the Master and Teacher of us all and learning the truth from Him.

(2) But it is not only into the facts and truths of

nature that we are concerned to inquire, but also into the facts and truths of life and religion. And here, once more, the broad principle laid down by Christ holds good. Most of us, indeed, are well content to leave the discoveries of science to be dealt with by minds more capable and more highly trained than our own; but there are truths which we cannot leave to others: our experience of life, and the questions which that experience breeds, will not suffer us to neglect or evade them. Even if we pass through life without a doubt on questions of such fundamental moment as "Is there a God? and what is He like?" or, "Is there a future life, and how may we prepare for it?" there are other questions which will come home to us and wring from us some sort of reply. Questions on the authority or the interpretation of Scripture, for example, or on the scope of the Atonement, or on the power of Prayer, or on the daily Providence which shapes our ends for us, or on the function and duration of Evil, no thoughtful man can honestly evade for long. And when such questions as these are raised, they are not always wisely met, nor are those who moot them always fairly handled, even in the Church itself. "Pride of reason must be humbled;" "God resists those who seek to be wise above that which is written;" "Temptations of the devil;" "Dannèd if you doubt;" "Danger of inquiry;" are among the phrases and warcries with which ignorant men who did not want to think have too often attempted to put down thought and stifle free inquiry.

How little they knew of the mind of Christ, how fatally they misinterpreted it, we may infer from the great axiom on which He so often leant. The words, in which we have already found the charter of science, are also a warrant for all honest inquiry. If we take Him for our teacher, we learn that, so far from being jealous of our growing too wise or knowing too much, God has thrown the

whole spiritual, no less than the whole physical, realm open to us; that here also, in the most inward and secret region of his activity, He invites us to learn all that we can learn, to appropriate all that we can make our own. Here, too, the veil is not on Him, nor on his truth, but on our own hearts. If we follow on to know, we shall know both Him and his way with us. The hidden things, whether of his providence or of his grace, are hidden from us only by the limitations of our own nature or the imperfection of our culture, only by our incapacity to grasp the vast inheritance He has conferred upon us. All that we can apprehend we may apprehend; all that we can take we may take. He does not want to conceal Himself from us, nor anything that is his; He delights to impart Himself to us. And if, as yet, much is covered from us, it is concealed only until we are prepared to see it and enjoy it; it is covered only that it may be uncovered the very moment we can apprehend and appropriate it.

(3) And so, finally, we reach the solid ground of hope which this Paradox places beneath our feet. For if nothing is hidden except that it may be manifested, and nothing kept secret except that it may come abroad, we may be very sure that a time in which all the secrets that now perplex and distress us will be revealed is coming, and coming as fast as we are becoming able to endure the splendours of its revelations. We may be sure that in proportion as we grow in spiritual life and power, that happy time will dawn on us. For the veil is on our eyes, not on the spiritual world which Christ has opened up to us. As soon as we *can* see more we *shall* see more; as soon as we can see *all* we shall see all. The veil will fall as soon as we can endure to look with unveiled face on the glory of the Lord. When that which is perfect has come in us, we shall forthwith find ourselves in a perfect world,

with all things sweetly attuned to our mind, and all open to our inquiring gaze.

What a hope, what a promise is this for the man of science! All the secrets of force, causation, life, growth, consciousness, thought, thrown open to him; and, for the man of religion, all the mysteries of prayer and providence, of Divine purpose and grace, uncovered and published abroad!

If we have at all entered into the meaning of this great saying, if we have found in it the charter of science, a warrant for all honest inquiry, and a solid ground for the hope that all problems are to be solved one day, and all mysteries, even the darkest, to grow luminous to us, we shall not grudge the time we have spent in tracing out its history, in marking how it gathers force and volume from every repetition of it, and deepens its hold upon us as the great Teacher and Saviour of men touches it again and again.

S. Cox.

### ON ROMANS V. 1.

No Verse in the New Testament has given rise to more divergent and strongly held opinions among the best scholars than has the Verse I have placed at the head of this paper. The three latest critical editors, Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Westcott, adopt the reading *Let us have peace*. This reading is accepted by Fritzsche, Hofmann, and Alford; by this last, however, with extreme and undisguised reluctance. But it is summarily rejected, for exegetical reasons, by the great commentators Meyer and Godet, who retain the more familiar reading, *We have peace*. In this they are supported by the first-rate textual critic, Dr. Scrivener.

Of the difficulty which has given rise to these conflicting

opinions, I shall in this paper attempt a solution, or rather, I shall do my best to defend the solution proposed in my Commentary on Romans. And I shall at the same time discuss the exposition of this and the two preceding verses given in the very excellent commentary we have lately received from the pen of Dr. Godet.

The reading *Let us have peace* is found in  $\aleph^*$  A B\* C D E K L, that is, in all the uncials earlier than the ninth century; and in some of the best cursives.

The words of Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, v. 13, "Monet justificatos ex fide Christi, non ex lege, pacem ad Deum habere," make it probable that the same reading was current in North Africa at the end of the second century. Origen expounds this verse at great length; and his exposition makes it quite certain that he had before him the subjunctive reading, and knew nothing of any other. For he uses the passage as a warning to avoid whatever conduct is inconsistent with peace with God. The same exposition is adopted by Chrysostom. Like Origen, he betrays total ignorance of any other reading; and this is the more remarkable because he discusses another exposition of the passage. The argument of each of these writers removes completely the doubt which usually clings to the testimony of the Fathers owing to the lateness and fewness of the existing copies of their writings. It is quite certain that Origen and Chrysostom, and almost certain that Tertullian, read, *Let us have peace with God*. We find, then, that in the former half of the third century, in places so far apart as Carthage and Palestine, the subjunctive reading was current; and that no other was known to the careful commentators Origen and Chrysostom.

The Versions confirm the testimony of the Greek manuscripts and the Fathers. The West, speaking to us in the Old Latin and the Vulgate, gives its vote as a unit in favour of the subjunctive reading. The Latin portions of F G



retain it, even in contradiction to the Greek portions of the same manuscripts. And the unanimous voice of the West is re-echoed by the old Syriac and the Armenian versions in the East, and by the Coptic and Ethiopic versions in the far South.

Of the reading *We have peace* the earliest trace is a correction in the Sinai MS., a correction attributed to the fourth century. We cannot now determine, or even guess, whether it was copied from an earlier manuscript, or was made for internal reasons. A similar correction, attributed to the sixth century, is found in the Vatican MS. *We have peace* is read in the closely related manuscripts FG and in P, all three from the ninth century. The Philoxenian Syriac has it; but no other early version. It is found in a majority, probably a large majority, of the cursives.

As witnesses for the indicative reading Tischendorf quotes Didymus, Epiphanius, three passages from Cyril, and Sedulius. But I notice that, in the quotations of Didymus and Epiphanius, and in the one quotation which is all I have yet been able to find of Cyril, the argument of the writer is not in the least affected by the variety of reading. All of them are discussing only the words *through our Lord Jesus Christ*. Therefore, since of the writings of these Fathers we possess only a few late copies, of Didymus I believe only one copy, written after the indicative reading had become common, I cannot accept the testimony of the existing manuscripts of their works as any proof or even presumption that these Fathers found this reading in the copies of the Epistle current in their day.

We have then a practically unanimous testimony, coming to us from the West and the East and the South, and reaching back to the second century, that St. Paul wrote *Let us have peace with God*.

An important consideration gives special force to this unanimous testimony. If St. Paul had written *We have*

*peace with God*, these words would be a glorious testimony of present peace with God, a testimony very likely to make a deep mark in the spiritual life of the church. Such a verse would be frequently quoted, both by preachers and people, and held fast in the memory and heart of all; as the same verse in the indicative reading is now quoted and remembered in all Protestant churches. It is one of those readings least likely to perish. Yet we find no trace, during five centuries, of any such mark made by it. The use which an expositor like Chrysostom would have made of the indicative reading we may infer from his glowing exposition of the indicatives in the next verse. On the other hand, the disappearance of a reading of no special importance is much less unlikely.

The not infrequent interchange of the vowels in question does not lessen the unlikeliness of the disappearance of the indicative reading, unless it can be shewn that the interchange is always or usually in one direction. The occasional interchange warns us not to accept as decisive a mere majority; but does very little to lessen the force of a unanimous verdict.

We are therefore compelled to admit that St. Paul wrote *Let us have peace with God*; that the difficulty of this reading, which so many feel now, suggested the change of one letter needful to replace the subjunctive by the indicative; that, owing to its greater simplicity, this reading became common in the Greek and especially the Byzantine church; but, not having become current till after the various Versions were made, it did not find its way into them. Surely this is the easiest way of accounting for all the known facts of the case.

At the same time it is a matter worthy of serious consideration that the reading so strongly supported is nevertheless rejected by the very able and learned commentators, Meyer and Godet. It must be admitted that their rejection

of it is the strongest protest they can make against the expositions of the subjunctive reading hitherto propounded.

This strong protest emboldens me to propose now another exposition, one agreeable, as no one can deny, to the grammar and usage of the Greek language; and, as I hope to shew, consonant with the thought of St. Paul, and not open to the objections which have compelled Meyer and Godet to reject the subjunctive reading nor greatly removed from the sense of the reading these commentators prefer.

It has hitherto been assumed that, in the reading *Let us have peace*, the aorist participle implies that justification has already taken place, and is given as a reason why we should *have peace with God*. But this assumption is unjust. The aorist participle implies simply that the abiding state of peace with God must be preceded by the event of justification; and, so far as grammar is concerned, leaves the context to determine whether justification is looked upon as actual and as a reason for having peace with God, or as the means by which it must be obtained. The latter is the use of the aorist participle in, I believe, all the innumerable places in the New Testament in which it precedes a subjunctive or imperative. Compare 1 Corinthians vi. 15; Acts xv. 36; Ephesians iv. 25; Hebrews vi. 1; 1 Peter i. 13; Matthew ii. 8, 13, 20, iv. 9, v. 24, vi. 6, vii. 6, ix. 13, 18, xi. 4, xiii. 28, xvii. 27, xxii. 13, xxvii. 64, xxviii. 19. Also Aristotle, *Nicom. Ethics*, III. v. 23, ἀναλαμβάνοντες δὲ περὶ ἐκάστης εἰπόμεν τίνες εἰσὶ κ.τ.λ.; VI. iii. 1, ἀρξάμενοι οὖν ἄνωθεν περὶ αὐτῶν πάλιν λέγωμεν. Even with a future indicative the aorist participle denotes almost always an event still future; as in Romans xv. 28; Acts xxiv. 25. In Romans v. 9, 10, where for once we have the other use, that is, where the participle recalls an actual fact in proof of the future event foretold by the finite verb, this is plainly indicated by the word *νῦν* before the first participle. The Greek usage just expounded suggests at once that in the

passage under discussion, as we have seen to be the case everywhere else in the New Testament, the aorist participle denotes an event still future, which must precede that to which the subjunctive mood exhorts. Certainly, the burden of proof rests with those who seek to set aside in this passage the ordinary use of the aorist participle.

We notice also that in the LXX. the construction before us is very common, as a rendering of two Hebrew imperatives, jussives, or cohortatives, with or without *vav*. So Genesis xi. 7, *καταβάντες συγχέωμεν*; xviii. 21, *καταβὰς οὖν ὄψομαι*; xix. 2, 15, 34, etc. That the translators chose this rendering for a Hebrew construction which they might have reproduced literally by two Greek imperatives, etc., proves how thoroughly inwoven into the Greek mind is the construction in question.

It is not correct to say that in these cases the aorist participle is used in the sense of an imperative or subjunctive. The participle has here, as always, its own proper sense. In cases like this, the Greek looked upon the action denoted by the participle, not as itself an object of distinct desire, but as subordinate to, and merely needful to bring about, the action or state denoted by the finite verb. This grouping of subordinate thoughts, by means of participles, around one chief thought, is a conspicuous and beautiful feature of the participle-loving Greek language. Where two actions are matters of distinct thought and desire, even the Greeks used two imperatives, as in Matthew ix. 5. In the passages just quoted from the Hebrew Bible it is evident that the former imperative is subordinate to the latter; and therefore, in full accord with the genius of the Greek language, the LXX. render them by one imperative preceded by an aorist participle.

We need not wonder that, although the construction now before us might grammatically denote an actual fact given as a motive for that to which the subjunctive exhorts, it is

never so used in the New Testament, unless Romans v. 1 be a solitary case. For such use, though grammatically correct, would give a sense very far removed from the ordinary sense of this construction. And whenever any one use of a grammatical form becomes common, it always tends to monopolise that form. Writers are loath to use a form commonly associated with a sense different from that which they wish to convey. The present participle, which is much less suited to denote a means to something still future, is constantly used to convey a reason or motive for a subsequent subjunctive or indicative. So Hebrews iv. 14, x. 19; 2 Corinthians iii. 12, iv. 1.

All this shews that the assumption that *δικαιωθέντες*, in the passage before us, denotes a past event given as a motive for now having peace with God, is not only not justified by the grammatical construction of the sentence, but runs counter to the entire usage of the Greek Testament. Another construction is not only admissible but is in full accord with the genius of the language. And that this other construction is the correct one I shall now endeavour to prove.

It will be my aim to shew that here, as everywhere else in the New Testament, the aorist participle followed by a present subjunctive specifies, not a motive for, but a means of obtaining, peace with God, that justification by faith is the gate by which we are to enter the abiding state of peace with God. If this exposition be correct, the Apostle's words may be suitably rendered, LET US THEN, JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, HAVE PEACE WITH GOD.

That this exposition is strongly supported by the usage of the Greek Testament I have already shewn. It is also supported strongly by the meaning of the words in question. For justification implies peace with God, as we learn from Verse 10, which is evidently a compact restatement of the argument of Verse 9. Consequently, they who have been



justified already have peace with God. It is therefore much more likely that St. Paul would represent justification by faith as the means by which peace with God, its immediate and necessary result, must be obtained, than as a motive for having that which, if already justified, they already have.

Only one objection, so far as I know, lies against the exposition now proposed, viz. that in Verses 9 and 10 St. Paul assumes that his readers are already justified and reconciled, and that even in Verse 2 he assumes that they already stand in the favour of God and rejoice in hope of glory. It might therefore appear that he could not in Verse 1 write as though their justification were still future. This objection will, I believe, be removed by a consideration of the Apostle's mode of thought as revealed in this Epistle.

St. Paul writes constantly from an ideal and rapidly changing standpoint. He identifies himself with that which he describes. Just so, *the Coming One*, in v. 14, can only refer to the incarnation of Christ, when He brought life for those smitten with death through Adam's sin. It is evident that St. Paul throws himself back to the days of Adam, and from that ideal standpoint looks forward to the birth and death of Christ. Similarly, the words *we shall be*, in vi. 5, refer to the resurrection life which St. Paul was himself already living. Similarly again, in vii. 14-25, he throws himself back to his own life before conversion and speaks of it as though no change had since taken place. On the other hand, in viii. 30, he throws himself forward into what seems to him to be the near future, and speaks of the coming glorification of the predestined ones as though already accomplished.

This mode of thought is, in my view, the best explanation of iv. 24, ἡμᾶς οἷς μέλλει λογίζεσθαι. To refer these words, as Fritzsche does, to the judgment day, is to break away from the constant phraseology of St. Paul, without

any hint whatever in the context. If we had no other case of an ideal standpoint, we might with some reluctance suppose that *us* includes the writer and those who in days to come will share his faith, and that a thought of these last moved him to write μέλλει λογίζεσθαι instead of καὶ ἐλογισθῇ. But it is much more easy to suppose that, as in v. 14, St. Paul places himself by the writer of Genesis and looks forward to the justification of believers in gospel days. This ideal standpoint, ever liable to change even in a moment, would account for τοῖς πιστεύουσιν instead of πιστεύουσιν. For St. Paul cannot mean that, to those who now believe, faith will at some future time be reckoned for righteousness. But, after writing μέλλει from an ideal standpoint in the past, he easily glides to his own actual standpoint of time present and speaks of the present faith of himself and his readers.

If this exposition of μέλλει be correct, we cannot doubt that v. 1 is also written from an ideal point of view. In ii. 1, iii. 9, St. Paul writes as though all his readers were still actually committing sin and under its condemnation and curse. In iii. 21, 22, he hears a proclamation of justification on the condition of faith. In Chapter iv. he discusses this condition. From the side of the writer of Genesis he looks forward to the justification of himself and those of his readers who believe. He tells us that to remove the obstacle to justification caused by our sins God gave up Christ to die; and raised Him from the grave in order thus to give a sure ground for faith, the one condition of justification. All obstacles are now removed. A prospect of immediate justification presents itself, and justification brings peace with God. It is thus the portal into personal Christian life; and this life, with its joyful and sure hope, St. Paul now proceeds to pourtray. And as he enters this new subject he conceives himself, in his intense and vivid thought, to be entering the life he is about to describe. He

bids his readers to join him in doing so. What he bids them do he conceives to be actually taking place in them and in himself. Consequently, in the next verse he speaks of them as already standing in the favour of God and rejoicing in hope of glory.

This hortatory form of speech is the more appropriate here because, although St. Paul himself rejoiced with unwavering faith in a present and assured justification, he could not forget that many of his readers had not the same full confidence. In order to help their faith by the influence of his own, he delights to speak, as in Verses 9-11, of their justification and their reconciliation with God as actual and undoubted. But his remembrance of the weakness of their faith prompts him in this verse to put himself by their side and join them in claiming, by justification through faith, the peace which is its immediate result.

This exposition of St. Paul's mode of thought is, I venture to believe, a complete reply to the objection that he could not speak of the justification of his readers as still future.

It now remains to me to shew that the interpretation offered here is the only one admissible; that is, to shew that those of Fritzsche, who follows Origen and Chrysostom, and of Hofmann, lie open to serious objection. This task has in great part been done for me by Meyer and Godet, who, rather than accept these interpretations, prefer to reject the overwhelming documentary evidence which supports the subjunctive reading. Even Fritzsche and Hofmann betray no small dissatisfaction with the expositions they offer.

If the words *justified by faith* are given, not as a means of, but a motive for, *peace* with God, we are left in great uncertainty as to the means by which St. Paul intends us to comply with his exhortation. Fritzsche, following Origen, supposes that he is warning us against whatever is inconsistent with peace with God, that is, against all sin. But surely a warning against sin needs a clearer specification

than is found in this verse. Moreover, as yet St. Paul has not said a word about the moral effects of the Gospel; and it is in the last degree unlikely that he would introduce so important a subject in so ambiguous a way. And there is nothing in the words used here which points forward to his subsequent teaching on the same subject. Again, a warning against conduct which involves loss of peace with God would be much more in place after, than before, the Apostle's exposition of the joyful hope which accompanies peace. For the greatness of the blessing is the best reason for holding it fast. I agree therefore with Meyer and Godet that a warning against sin would be out of place at this point of the Apostle's argument.

This last objection, however, so forceful against the supposition of an exhortation such as the exposition of Fritzsche involves, which exposition these commentators had in view in making the objection, has no force against the altogether different exposition suggested here. For, as I read him, St. Paul does not urge his readers in this place to retain the blessing of peace with God by avoiding sin, but to accept it by faith. Moreover, v. 1-11 is by no means "a piece of theoretical teaching,"<sup>1</sup> but is a glowing outburst of Christian confidence and joy. The theoretical defence of justification by faith has been completed in Chapter iv., and in the verse before us the Apostle passes from abstract doctrine to personal and experimental Christian life. Need we wonder that he marks the transition by urging his readers to join him in accepting that which, as he has just proved, God gave Christ to bring about, and now offers on the condition of faith, and which will bring with it the blessings he now proceeds to unfold?

Again, the ambiguity which, in Fritzsche's interpretation, clings to the words *let us have peace*, is altogether absent from that which I venture to advocate. For I hold that the

<sup>1</sup> Meyer.

words *justified by faith* themselves announce the means by which we are to *have peace with God*. Moreover, in Fritzsche's exposition, the words *by faith* are needless. For, if actual justification be given as a reason for having peace with God, the reason is equally valid by whatever means peace has been obtained. But if justification is given as the means of peace, very appropriately St. Paul adds the means by which justification is itself obtained. Analysed, the argument would be : Let us believe, and thus be justified, and thus have peace with God. This triple exhortation St. Paul, in full accord with Greek thought, threw into one exhortation supported by two subordinate explanations.

By what means we are to have peace with God, according to Hofmann's exposition, I am unable, after repeated reading, to discover. He endeavours to cast a veil over the real difficulty by bringing into special prominence the words *through our Lord Jesus Christ*. That these are the most prominent words of the Chapter, I admit. But of their special prominence we have no hint in this verse. Hofmann expounds : "Through Him we desire, having by means of faith become righteous, to allow our relationship to God to be a relationship of peace." But how the Apostle designs us to accomplish this desire, Hofmann does not tell us. His own exposition sadly needs an expositor.

It will doubtless be objected that the exposition propounded above is novel. This I cannot deny. Indeed I am compelled to admit that both Origen and Chrysostom assume that justification, already received, is made by St. Paul a motive for avoiding sin. But if I reject the exposition of these Fathers, Meyer and Godet reject both their exposition and the reading which they found in the manuscripts current in their day, the only reading known to them. And it seems to me that the testimony of the Fathers as to what the Apostle wrote is of immensely greater value than their testimony as to what he meant. This is not the only passage in which



modern scholarship has been compelled to reject an exposition supported by the general consent of the Fathers.

A few words now about Dr. Godet's suggestion, which he admits to be peculiar to himself, that in iv. 25 the word *justify* denotes a justification of the whole world at the death of Christ. He objects to the exposition adopted by all other writers that it gives to the same word *διά* two different senses in the same verse, and that it would require not *διά* but *εἰς*. Certainly *εἰς* would be correct, and would give a good sense not far removed from that intended by the Apostle. But *διά* is equally appropriate. It denotes here, as always with the accusative, a motive for action. Our sins prompted God to give Christ to die. And God's own purpose to justify believers,<sup>1</sup> when once conceived in the mind of God, became to Him a motive prompting Him to raise Christ from the dead that his resurrection might evoke that faith which He resolved to make the condition of justification. A good parallel is found in the *Symbol of Calcedon*, δι' ἡμᾶς καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν. Dr. Godet objects to the repetition of *διά* as needless according to the usual exposition. Does he not feel, in both these passages, the beauty and force of the repetition? It directs our attention in the one case to two distinct acts of God, and in the other to two distinct thoughts in the mind of God.

That God justified the world at the death of Christ, is an idea which never finds expression in the writings of St. Paul. The words *justification* in v. 17, and *justify* everywhere, denote the justification of individuals. And that this is the sense intended in iv. 25 is made quite certain by the first word of the next verse, a word prompted, as *οὖν* indicates, by the word to which Godet wishes to give an altogether different sense. Nor are 2 Corinthians v. 19, Romans iii. 24, parallel cases. For although we there learn that the reconciliation of the world, the justification of *all*, who *sinned*,

<sup>1</sup> Rom. iii. 26.

was in process in the incarnation and death of Christ, and in the redemption-price paid in his blood, yet the present tense of the verbs there used forbids us to infer that the reconciliation was completed. The proposed exposition is alien from the mind of St. Paul as reflected in his Epistles : and we have seen that it finds no support in the preposition used in this verse.

One practical result of the foregoing discussion is, I think, increased confidence in our ancient documents of the New Testament. This confidence would be somewhat shaken if we were compelled to admit that in so important a passage as that before us the entire body of our oldest and best witnesses to the text of the New Testament had been corrupted. But I have endeavoured to shew that, although we find reason to reject an exposition proposed by the ablest of the early commentators, we may yet accept without doubt the words which they received and expounded, as being the actual language of the great Apostle.

JOSEPH AGAR BEET.

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*THE POSITION OF PROMISES OF REWARD IN  
THE MORAL TEACHING OF THE GOSPEL.*

ST. MATTHEW xix. 16-xx. 16.

THE manner in which the moral exhortations of our Lord are coupled with assurances of reward has at all times engaged much attention, and seems of late to have been a stumbling-block to many minds. In considering it, we may with advantage commence by recalling the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard (St. Matt. xx. 1-16), which, with its context, seems to embody the substance of our Lord's teaching on the subject. It is essential to consider it in relation to the incident which had preceded it, and which gave occasion for it. We read that one came unto our Lord, and said unto Him: "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus said unto him: "Keep the commandments;" such as, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal; and, in a word, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man said unto Him: "All these have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" Jesus said unto him, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." On which our Lord took occasion to observe to his disciples how hard it is for those who have riches, or as He elsewhere expressed it, for those who trust in riches, to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Eternal life was, in the Young Man's eyes, a reward or wage to be received in payment for some obedience or

sacrifice ; and the sacrifice which our Lord demanded of him seemed unreasonable. He was not prepared to surrender everything for our Lord's sake, and at his command. Upon this, St. Peter eagerly reminds our Saviour that he and the other Apostles had forsaken all, and had followed Him, and enquires : " What shall we have therefore ? " The answer is in striking contrast with the severity with which our Lord had simply urged on the Young Man the sacrifices he must make. Jesus said unto them, " Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But," He adds, " many that are first shall be last ; and the last first." And then follows the parable in question.

The connection of thought is natural and striking. It would almost seem as though our Lord at first repelled, with a certain generous energy, the doubt which Peter's question appeared to raise, whether the reward of his faithful followers would be adequate to their sacrifices. He promises at once a more than ample return for any such sacrifice ; as though he would have none think that they would in any respect be the losers, or that they could be making any real sacrifice in his service. Peter spoke almost as though he were placing his Master under some obligation by forsaking all and following Him. Such is the tone of the enquiry, " What shall we have therefore ? " But our Lord makes him feel that the obligation was all on the other side ; and that, if the relation between Him and his disciples were to be measured, in any way, by a comparison of the mutual benefits received, they were infinitely his debtors. They should receive an hundred-fold,

and should have everlasting life. But having thus made it plain, first, by his answer to the Young Man, that an unlimited and unreserved self-surrender is demanded from those who would follow Him, and receive the eternal life He offers them; and secondly, by his answer to Peter, that He would reward any such self-surrender an hundred-fold; He proceeds, in the parable, to obviate the supposition that the reward must needs be related to the service rendered in the proportion of an exact equivalent, so that it could be a matter of bargain or strict right. The relation of the King of Heaven to his subjects is that of a generous master, and not of a mere employer. He is benevolent and considerate, as well as strictly just; and the rewards of his service are bestowed, not only as wages, but as gifts. Because a man may have had fewer opportunities of serving Him than another, it does not follow that He will be less bountiful to him. In the exercise of his benevolence, He will do as He will with his own; and no one has a right to be envious because He is generous. In a word, the moral relations of men to God, in the kingdom of heaven, involve unreserved surrender on their part, and abundant reward on his; and, at the same time, a distribution of those rewards not necessarily dependent on the actual amount of service which has been rendered, but on the free exercise of God's good will, having regard to the varying circumstances of those towards whom it is called forth. There may thus be many cases in which the first shall be as the last, and the last as the first; so that, in the great final account, men's rewards and merits may often be reduced to a far greater equality than would be supposed by them in the midst of their struggles and their rivalry on earth.

Such seems the general teaching of the Parable; and it must be our guide in dealing with the question under consideration—a question which it is of the highest import-



ance to the depth and freedom of our spiritual life that we should thoroughly appreciate. There can be no question that promises of reward, such as those here given to Peter, occupy a very prominent place in the exhortations of our Lord and in the preaching of the Apostles. The Sermon on the Mount starts with promises of blessing ; it bids Christians rejoice when they are persecuted for righteousness' sake, because great is their reward in heaven ; it holds out, as our constant encouragement, the assurance that our Father, who sees in secret, will reward us openly ; and it concludes with the declaration that the faithful Christian will be found to have built his house upon the rock. Elsewhere the faithful servant of the kingdom of heaven is compared to one who trades skilfully with his lord's talents. For the tone of the Apostles, it is interesting to recall the opening of the First Epistle of St. Peter, the very Apostle who asked the question, and who received the assurance, we have been considering. "Blessed," he exclaims, "be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." But thoughts akin to these were not less potent in the mind of St. Paul. He describes Christians as having entered into a contest in which they look forward to a prize ; and so, at the close of his life, he exclaims to Timothy, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, or race, I have kept the faith : henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Now these exhortations to Christian duty, and this aspect of Christian life, have occasioned difficulties of two distinct classes. In the first place, in proportion as Christian souls

have realized their own unworthiness, they have been inclined to shrink from language which seems to imply that they can receive anything from God in the nature of a reward. These feelings correspond to our Lord's words, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." Similarly, some of the divines to whom we owe the great blessing of a firm grasp of the doctrine of our forgiveness and salvation by God's free grace, through faith, and not for our works or deservings, have exhibited a certain hesitation in dwelling on such free and full assurances of reward as we have been reviewing; as though they might be misinterpreted too easily into countenancing some doctrine of merits, and of reliance upon good works. On the other hand, it has been often urged as an objection to the whole moral teaching of the Gospel, that it incites men to the pursuit of righteousness for the mere sake of reward, for some selfish or ulterior purpose; whereas no man can be really righteous unless he loves righteousness for its own sake, independent of its consequences. There are earnest writers on ethical questions in the present day by whom this objection is felt; and the feeling out of which it arises is one of the noblest and truest, and, let it be added, one of the oldest and deepest in human nature. One of the most beautiful of Greek plays, the *Hippolytus* of Euripides, illustrates how a man who, by his very virtue, is defeated in the chief aspiration of his life, who is dying in misery, and who has no existence of conscious blessedness to look forward to, nevertheless receives, in the honour of such a death, a deep and noble satisfaction. Thus, while on the one side it is felt that men can never merit any rewards at the hands of God, it is felt, on the other, that those rewards should not be their main motives; and the question arises, how the tone of the Gospel teaching in this respect

is to be harmonized with the purest theology on the one hand, and with the most sensitive morality on the other.

The explanation will, perhaps, best be discerned if we observe that a similar difficulty, or, we might say, delicacy of feeling, arises in the ordinary relations of life. Consider the case of love, or friendship, between two persons. Such relations are felt to be degraded—they cease in fact really to exist—when the motive of attachment on either side is merely that of personal and mutual advantage. Love which is not, in this sense, disinterested is not love; and men despise a man who affects friendship for a powerful neighbour for the mere sake of what can be obtained from him. But, on the other hand, it is part of the essence of such relations that there should be a return, and a generous return, on the part of friends for the love or the friendship which is bestowed. No doubt, one of the most beautiful feelings is love which is bestowed without any possibility of return; but, none the less, where it is possible that the love, the friendship, or the kindness should be returned, there it ought to be returned; and there is an incompleteness, a maimed and unsatisfied character, about mutual relations where such mutual benefits are not interchanged. But what deserves more particular observation is, that the nature of this relationship is much more easily felt than expressed. The beauty of any such relation between man and man, or between man and woman, would be at once marred, if the love, or the benefit, which the one could bestow on the other were put forward as constituting anything like a formal claim, so as to transform the relation into one of mere exchange; but yet who would not be ashamed if, in point of fact, he made no adequate return for the love or the kindness bestowed on him? The return must come from a free heart; and the love must be given on the one side for the same reason that it is given on the other, without calculation of proportionate benefits, or

regard to anything but the indulgence of the love itself. But it must be given on both sides, if the relation is to be complete; and no generous mind would accept the devotion of another without thus giving all it could in return, and pouring out on one who loves it the riches of its own love, and of all it can bestow. This is the essence of the relationship of persons, as distinguished from the mere commercial or legal relations of exchange. Its exact bearings cannot be put into strict language, and it sometimes seems to vanish under definition; but we all know that in its realization consists the chief charm of family and social life. In proportion as such life is transformed into one general habit of giving, does it become blessed and lovely. In proportion as every one feels that it is more blessed to give than to receive, every one is giving and every one is receiving; but the sense of giving overpowers that of receiving; and the more generous the soul, the more it offers and the more it gives.

Now in order to apply these considerations to the question before us, we have only to observe that the very purpose of the Gospel is to transform our relation to God into a personal relation, similar to those which prevail among ourselves. He is our Father, and his Son our Brother; and He offers to dwell with us, and to commune with us, as a man with his friend. It is this which constitutes the essential difference between the Law and the Gospel. The characteristic feature of the position of those who were in covenant with God before Christ came was, that their relations with Him were in great measure subject to the rule of strict and formal law. It was, indeed, possible for them, as is seen in the case of the Patriarchs, to rise in faith and hope above this legal relation, and to look forward to that free position of sonship which was afterwards to be established. But, in St. Paul's phrase, before faith came, "we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which

should afterwards be revealed." God stood in some measure apart from men, having laid down fixed rules for his service and worship; and men approached Him under these legal conditions. Perhaps, in his awful majesty and unapproachable holiness, as a Spirit dwelling in light, whom no man could approach unto, He was too far removed from human thought and human sympathy for personal relationship with Him to be generally possible. But this difficulty was removed by the incarnation of his Son, and by the atonement offered by Him; and, from the moment that God was made flesh and dwelt among us, the way has been opened for men to live in a communion with Him and with his Son similar to that which they maintain between themselves and their fellows. Henceforth, every obligation of man to God, and every relation of God to man, ceases to be one of legal tenure and of formal justice; it becomes one of free equity, and bears all the unrestrained and self-determining character of love.

It would seem that nothing is so important as this for us to bear in mind, if we would appreciate the characteristic doctrines of the Gospel. It would not, perhaps, be too much to say, that every perversion of them, and every misconception of them, arises from their being translated from this personal character into one of formal relations. Take, for instance, the vicarious sacrifice of our Lord. Transform it into the shape of what may be called vicarious exchange; let it be represented, as it so often has been in formal theology, as a legal transaction, by which a penalty is transferred from one victim to another, and it may revolt our sense of justice. But regard it as a personal act of self-sacrifice, similar in kind to that which is every day performed by husbands and wives, by friends, and in a conspicuous degree by soldiers, and it is seen that the doctrine does but bring into our relations with God and Christ one of the deepest and most sacred of human relationships.



The case is similar with the doctrine of justification by faith. Let faith be, as it were, legalized; let it be represented as a mere act of obedience, such as were the acts prescribed under the old law, and our forgiveness and justification by it may appear arbitrary, and may seem to lose sight of the necessary moral conditions of salvation. But let it be regarded as the personal surrender of the soul to a personal God of all truth and righteousness; and then St. Paul's proclamation that "now the righteousness of God, without law,"—apart from law—"is manifested," becomes a declaration that God henceforth deals with us, through Christ, on those generous principles of mutual love which govern the highest personal relationship. God loves us individually, as united to Christ, and as loved by Him; and henceforth we are lifted into a relation to Him in which all the impulses and movements of love, and mercy, and generosity, of the highest equity and justice, have free play between us, untrammelled by any legal or formal conditions.

It will now be easy to apply these considerations to those promises of reward and blessing which are so freely offered by our Lord in the Gospels. If we were to regard Him, as is sometimes done, as merely proclaiming a moral law and giving it the requisite sanctions, the question might assume a different character; though, even then, there would be much to be said on the necessity, as a mere matter of justice, of a guarantee that, in the end, obedience to his commands will be adequately rewarded and disobedience to them adequately punished. But it would be to treat the question very imperfectly if we were to dwell merely on this aspect of it, for the characteristic of our Lord's gracious language is the assurance it gives us that righteousness will be far more than adequately rewarded, that blessing will be poured upon his faithful people in an abundance beyond their utmost conceptions; so that eye hath not seen, nor

ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them who love Him. But consider Him not as a legislator, or a moral teacher only, but as the Son of God, coming to us in his Father's name, to proclaim his Father's love, to win our hearts to Him, and to establish us in the relation of sons to our Father in heaven; and what other tone would become Him than one of unbounded love, generosity, bountifulness, and mercy, on the part of his God and our God? He came to make on us an immense demand, to ask of us the devotion of our whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength; would it have become Him—would it, at least, have been compatible with a relation of love and friendship between God and ourselves—if, while making such a demand, He had not assured us that God, on his part, was desirous of pouring out on us all the riches of his grace, and righteousness, and truth? God comes before us as a living Person, asking us to transform our whole existence into a life of perpetual giving to Him—to act towards Him, as well as towards others, on the principle that it is more blessed to give than to receive. How could He make the request—we need not shrink from enquiring—unless He presented Himself to us in the same character, as always more ready to hear than we to pray, wont to give more than either we desire or deserve, and thus enabling our Lord to appeal to us by this Divine example, and to exhort us to be perfect even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect? If it could be conceived possible that one of ourselves should ask the whole devotion of another person, without offering our own love and devotion and utmost benefits—I will not say in return, but—at the same time, we may then conceive it possible that our Saviour could have addressed men in a tone of less unrestricted and abundant generosity. It would be a sordid mind which saw, in the offer of generous love and devotion on the part of another, an appeal to selfish or

mercenary considerations ; and to take any such view of the promises of rewards and blessings held out in the Gospel is —when once the relation assumed by our Lord is perceived —an equal instance of a sordid and unworthy spirit. It is precisely because all such considerations are excluded from the new relation in which our Lord came to place us, precisely because we henceforth stand towards God, not in a formal, but in a living and loving, a friendly and a child-like relation, that He speaks to us without reserve of the bounty and the blessing He desires to bestow on us, and shews that He would thus win our love by a display of his own.

We may now perceive the answer to the two classes of difficulties from which we started. In the first place, the doctrine of God rewarding us for our good works is so far from being inconsistent with the truth of our salvation by his free grace, for the sake of Christ alone, that it is at once a necessary consequence of that truth, and entirely dependent on it. It is precisely because, for Christ's sake, God has received us into a relation of love and sonship towards Him, that He is able to deal with us in a manner which is independent of strict considerations of merit, of work done, of remuneration earned. A father encourages his children with rewards, not as an equivalent for what they have done, or for the services they have rendered, but because the mutual relations of personal love imply mutual giving, not according to the merit of the receiver, but according to the bounty of the giver. Similarly, God's gracious and bountiful promises of rewards for our good works are not offers of equivalents, they are assurances of a grace and generosity which are intended to call forth our own, from motives of gratitude ; they are an application, in God's own dealings, of the principle "Give, and it shall be given unto you," which is the highest principle of personal relationship. In proportion, therefore, as we

believe that we are freely forgiven, and made the sons of God by adoption and grace, in that proportion are we the more bound, or rather the more privileged, to insist on the gracious truth that our Father in heaven is waiting to return to us a hundred-fold every gift we could offer Him of ourselves, our substance, our labour, or our life. God forbid, indeed, that we should indulge that monstrous perversion, which strikes at the root of this principle of free personal interchange of loving service, that men may accumulate a store of merits which can be drawn on, and applied, as of strict right. Whatever alters the relation between God and man into one of debt, instead of one of grace, destroys the very essence and blessedness of the Gospel. But there is no more noble, stimulating, and inspiring motive to moral and spiritual energy than that of feeling that we are living under the eye, and in the presence, of a God and Saviour who, of his free love and grace, will return with more and more abundant blessing every effort that proceeds from devotion to Himself, so that "plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, we shall of Him be plenteously rewarded."

A similar reply may be made to the objection which arises on the score of the claim of righteousness to be loved and pursued for its own sake, independent of consequences. It is forgotten, in raising such a difficulty, that the grace and bounty of God, as displayed in the promises and assurances of the Gospel, are themselves the loftiest exhibition of righteousness in the form of love. It is a love which can only pour itself out in response to a love like its own, upon hearts which are reconciled to it, and which love and trust it; and its offer is therefore necessarily expressed in a form which implies this condition. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." "If ye keep my com-

mandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." But it is dragging all such expressions away from their natural, their human, their living signification, to see in them the offer of a formal and extraneous reward. They exhibit love, righteousness, and truth pouring themselves forth, in order to evoke love, righteousness, and truth in return, as the heavens pour the rain on the earth, to receive it again in grateful returns of vapour and cloud. In a word, it is by the light thrown on them by the person of Christ, and of the God with whom He reconciles and unites us, that the moral teaching and the moral methods of the Gospel must be interpreted. Objections against that teaching and that method are mainly based on the tacit supposition that they are to be understood and applied under the same circumstances as all other moral teaching, and that the men to whom they are addressed remain in their natural condition. But the circumstances are entirely altered by the fact that our Lord and his Father place themselves in that personal relation towards us which we have been considering. The moral position of every man to whom the message of the Gospel is brought is entirely transformed. He exists no longer in purely natural relations; he is introduced to relations which are supernatural. Three Divine persons, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, are introduced into his moral world. He is appealed to by One who is both God and man, but still man; he is thus brought into a new spiritual relationship; and from henceforth every moral obligation, every moral affection, becomes animated, inspired, clothed with flesh and blood and with all the colours of humanity, by appearing as the will of that incarnate Deity, and as sanctioned by his voice. It is frequently forgotten, but should ever be remembered, that it is only in proportion as account is taken of these new facts and realities which are introduced into the Christian's life, that



any judgment can be passed on Christian morality; and, on the other hand, from the Christian's point of view, all moral systems are necessarily imperfect which do not admit those facts and realities as their main determining element. The question whether we stand towards God and Christ in that personal relation which we have been contemplating is the first problem which, since the time of our Lord, a moral philosopher has to consider. If we do, then we are in a relation which transforms all other relations; and moral problems can no longer be adequately considered on a merely natural basis.

Accordingly, that noble instinct of the human heart, the love of righteousness, truth, and goodness for their own sake, receives under the Gospel a transformation which illumines with the purest light of heaven that language of blessing and promise which marks our Lord's exhortations. It is a noble thing to love righteousness, truth, purity, and goodness in themselves—that is to say, in the abstract. But surely it is more noble, more inspiring, more natural, to love them, if the expression may be allowed, in the concrete, in the very substance and personality of Him who is their Author and Source; to regard them as the attributes, the eternal attributes, of an infinitely righteous, true, pure, and holy Person; and to love Him in whom they all subsist with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength. After all, it is to be remembered that righteousness, truth, goodness, and the like, are all abstract expressions—conceptions of the human mind as much as the names of colours, such as whiteness or redness, or of natural qualities, such as gravitation or heat. They do not exist in themselves, but only in persons; they are elements of personal character and life, and it is here alone that they have their reality. Our Lord does not merely, like other moral teachers, exhibit righteousness, truth, and goodness as abstract standards and objects of attainment. But He displays them in his

own character and that of his Father as united in a personal will, and actively operating upon us. We behold them pouring themselves out on us in Him and through Him, at the cost of his own suffering and death. In a word, He exhibits them as all united in that one supreme form of personal life and action which we call love, and which St. Paul describes as the one complete and enduring energy of our moral and spiritual nature. Everything passes away but this; and even though faith and hope abide, they are subordinated to the supreme energy of charity. It is this which is the animating spirit of all our Lord's teaching. He offers love—love which is ever giving, ever blessing, ever rewarding, here and hereafter, all who respond to it, however imperfectly, with a similar love—rewarding them a hundred-fold; here, it may be, not without persecutions and sufferings like his own, though persecutions and sufferings which themselves bring the deepest blessings; and, hereafter, with eternal life. There was no other influence by which the heart of man could be fully won; and, when the heart is thus won for a righteous, a true, a holy, and a living God, all else, all striving after the perfections of that God and Father, must surely follow. In a word, as in the case of the Young Man who came to Him, our Lord 'does demand everything; as He assured St. Peter, He does give us everything; and, as He declares in the Parable, He gives it not according to our own labours or deservings, but out of his own goodwill, and with a generous regard for all the weaknesses, the ignorances, and the misfortunes of our position. Perfect love could do no less, as perfect love could do no more.

HENRY WACE.

*THE SIN UNTO DEATH.*

1 JOHN v. 16.

THERE are not many passages in the New Testament which are more difficult and perplexing than this; nor are there many which men of a delicate or an aroused conscience have so often wrested to their own hurt, if not to their own destruction. Which of us has not met some sensitive and haggard soul driven to the verge, or over the verge, of madness by the dreadful conviction that he or she had sinned the sin which is unto death, and by the horrible conclusion that from this death there is no possible issue into life everlasting?

Quite apart from any misinterpretation or misapplication of it, too, the passage is in itself very difficult to interpret. Two difficulties are suggested by it at which the Church has always marvelled and been perplexed; and two marvels are affirmed in it of which perhaps the most marvellous feature is that the Church has never expressed any astonishment at them, although, as I judge, these are its real difficulties rather than those which she has selected for special wonder.

The two recognized difficulties of the Verse are, (1) the sin unto death, of which the Church is still asking "What is it?" conscious, apparently, that the question has never yet been answered to her satisfaction; and (2) that for this sin—so at least the Church has assumed—St. John forbids us to pray, as though it were beyond the reach of forgiveness, as if there were at least one sin for which "the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin," could not atone.

The two unrecognized difficulties or wonders are, (1) that the Apostle declares every departure from the Divine Will to be a separation from the Divine Life, although it is not necessarily a sin unto death; and (2) assures us that, in every case but one, if we ask life for those who have thus

separated themselves from life, God will "give us life for them." And *these* seem to me very much more difficult than *those*.

Now, of course, our only hope of apprehending a Verse so difficult in itself, and which the misinterpretations thrust upon it have rendered still more difficult, lies in a patient study both of the Verse itself and of its connections (say from Verses 9-18 of this Chapter) in the light of St. John's habitual modes of thought and expression. Happily the Verse itself sets us on a good track for our study, since, from its very structure, it is evident that St. John is here blending two themes, one of which is subordinate to the other. His main theme is the scope and power of Prayer. But the scope of prayer suggests its limitations; and it is only as he is marking a limit which prayer cannot pass that he speaks of the sin unto death. If, therefore, we would apprehend what he has to say on Sin, we must first consider what he has to say on Prayer. We can hardly hope to follow him when he speaks of the sin which is *not* to be prayed for, until we understand what it is that we *are* to pray for, and why we are to pray for it.

I. We take, first, then, the recognized difficulty about *Prayer*. And, if we look at all carefully at the Verse, it is at once clear to us that this difficulty is purely of our own making. For, despite the assumption of the Church, St. John does not *forbid* us to pray for the forgiveness of any sin. All he does is to decline advising that we should pray for the forgiveness of a sin which he specifies, if we happen to believe that sin not to be within the scope of the Divine forgiveness: "There is a sin unto death; *I do not say that he shall pray for that*;" or still more literally, "*not concerning that am I now saying that he shall pray.*" At some other time he may, or may not, enjoin us to pray even for this sin; but, for the present at least, he does not enjoin us: and that surely is very far from *forbidding* us to pray for it.

How far his words are from a prohibition we shall understand the moment we reflect on what we ourselves mean, and wish to convey, when we say to a child, "I do not *bid*, I do not *command* you to do this or that." We may mean "I heartily wish you would do it without being told"; we cannot mean less than, "I leave it open to you, you are quite free to do it or not, as you will." And St. John did not mean less than this. He neither enjoins nor forbids his disciples to pray for a brother who had sinned a sin unto death. He expressly declines to do either; that is, he left them free to decide for themselves whether they would pray for him or would not.

And, if they were his disciples indeed, they would determine this open question by the general principles, the theory of Christian Prayer, which he had just laid down. Of *Christian* prayer, I say, for, from Verse 13, it is evident that he is addressing himself only to those who "believe in the name of the Son of God." And if we look back to that Verse we find that he is telling his disciples for what reason, for what end, he has taken the pains of writing this Epistle to them. He has declared to them what he himself has heard and seen and handled of the Word of Life, in order that they may "know that they have eternal life";—not *hope* that they *may* have it some day in the far-distant future; but *know* that they *have* it now, already, in this present time. He would have them sure that they have already commenced the life over which change and death have no power, the very same life which they are to possess and enjoy in the world in which there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying. This, indeed, is the main theme both of his Gospel and of his Epistle,—that the eternal life which was in God from the beginning, and in which from the beginning God had intended man to share, has been manifested in Christ Jesus; and manifested in Him that all men might receive it from Him, that all men might rise to their true



and proper life, the life God intended them for, in and through Him. The *want* of this eternal life is eternal death; and the *loss* of this eternal life is eternal death. Men are dead who have never been quickened into it; and, even after they have been quickened into it, they may die out of it.<sup>1</sup> The "sin unto death" will cast them back into the death from which they have been delivered. And because even those who *have* eternal life may lose it, he wants them not only to know that they have it, but so to cherish it as that they may never lose it.

How, then, may they cherish it? *By prayer*, replies the Apostle, and by that trust in the pure, kind, saving will of God which prayer implies. "This," he says, "is the confidence we have in Him that, if we ask anything according to his will, He heareth us." It is not God's will that any should perish. It is his will that all should be saved unto life everlasting. When we pray for "life," therefore, whether it be our own life or the life of our fellows, we know that what we ask is in accordance with his will; and hence we may be and ought to be sure that He will answer us. Whatsoever else we ask, we ask with a view to life, our own life or that of others; we do not really wish Him to grant us anything inimical either to our own life or that of the world: and, therefore, since it is his steadfast and abiding will to give us life, and all that conserves life and contributes to it, "we know that we have the petitions we have desired of Him."

In short, the true power, the true blessedness, of Prayer lies in the fact that, as all real prayer is simply an asking that God's will may be done in us and in our fellows, which will is our life, our salvation, we may be sure that He will give us what we ask of Him. And, of course, it is part, it is the negative aspect, of this blessedness that if we ask anything *not* in accordance with his will, anything adverse

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews vi. 4-6; x. 26-29.

to "life," He will not give us what we ask, though He still listens to what we say, and is no more offended with us than we are with children who ask us for that which *we* know, though they do not, it will not be good for them to have.

Now some of St. John's disciples may have believed that when a man had sinned a certain kind of sin—the sin unto death—it was contrary to God's will that he should ever be quickened into life again. They may have held that in that sin his spiritual life came to an end, just as our physical life seems to come to an end, though it does not really come to an end, when we die. And the Apostle does not pause to argue with them, or seek to enlarge their conception of "life," their sense of the scope of the Divine mercy. He does not even tell them that, in his own apprehension of it, the scope of that Mercy was far wider than in theirs; nor does he now remind them that, in itself, the Divine mercy must be of far wider scope than even he was able to conceive, though that was true too, and he must have known it to be true. All that was beside his present purpose. What he is now concerned for is that they should feel how blessed it was that there is a good, pure, redeeming Will at work behind all the changes and mysteries of human life; that this Will has been manifested as the light and life of men in the man Christ Jesus; and that therefore they might ask for "life" and be sure of getting it, since they were asking for a thing "according to his will." He leaves them to determine for themselves what the Divine Will which saves men is, and how far it extends; all he demands of them is that they will not ask for anything which they hold to be opposed to that Will.

II. And so we reach our second difficulty, the recognized difficulty about *Sin*. For while some of St. John's disciples may have held that the "sin unto death" was beyond the reach of forgiveness, and was not, therefore, to be prayed

for, others of them may have believed that there was no limit to the Divine forgiveness; they may have held that "the blood of Christ cleanseth from *all* sin," even from the sin unto death. But neither with them does St. John stay to argue and explain. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. But let them all be sure of this, that whatever they asked which was according to the will of God would be granted them; and let them all be earnest in the endeavour to ascertain what that Will was and to adopt it. At the same time he admits, *par parenthesis*, that there is a sin unto death, and will neither advise any man to pray for it or forbid him to pray for it. He only mentions this sin in passing, indeed; and therefore we must not expect him to explain it. Whatever it was, or was held to be, it was evidently quite familiar both to him and to those for whom he wrote. It presented no difficulty to them, though it presents a difficulty so insoluble, or so nearly insoluble, to us. It fell naturally into its place in their creed and convictions, though it is all but impossible to give it its due place in ours.

Obviously our only hope of framing a reasonable, an admissible and helpful, conception of it lies in our acquaintance with the leading thoughts and convictions of St. John, which were also those of the men to whom he wrote and who understood him so well that he did not need to explain his meaning to them. And perhaps, if we seek to recover his leading thoughts, or even the leading thoughts of this Epistle, we may arrive at a conception of this sin unto death which will at least lessen the perplexity and distress it has occasioned us.

These thoughts are summarized—sufficiently for our purpose—in Verses 11–18 of this Chapter. "This is the record" which St. John felt himself specially called to bear, "that God hath given us eternal life; and that this life is in his Son." In other words he held and taught that the

very life of God—*eternal life*—was manifested to men in Christ Jesus, and was manifested in Him that they might lay hold upon it and share it. If they believed in Him, they became of one heart, one nature, one spirit with Him. The “life” that was in Him passed into them. In St. John’s peculiar idiom, “they *had* the Son,” and therefore “they *had life*,” the only life worthy of that name. But if he who had the Son had life, “he that had not the Son of God had not the life” of God. He was dead to God, dead in sin. In St. John’s view, the proper life of man is life in God, the life manifested in Christ Jesus, and imparted by Christ Jesus to as many as believe on Him. All who had not this life were dead, All who *lost* it died. Any act which separated a man from Christ, which cut him off from the communion of life in Christ, was “a sin *unto death*”: for how should a man lose life, and yet not die? Like his brother apostles, St. John held that it was possible for a man, even after he had been quickened into life and called into the fellowship of Christ, to fall away from it, to deny and renounce “the Life indeed,” to apostatize from Him, to sink back into the death from which he had been delivered. How could they doubt it when one of themselves, Judas Iscariot, had thus fallen away from Christ, lapsed from the life of fellowship with Him into the death of separation from Him?

“There is a sin unto death,” then. But it does not inevitably follow that the communion thus broken can never be renewed, that those who have fallen from life into death can never be delivered from the death into which they have fallen. So long as a man exists repentance may be possible to him, faith may be possible, and therefore life may be possible. “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin,” even from sins against Himself, and against the life we have in Him.<sup>1</sup> In some cases, no doubt, as in that of

<sup>1</sup> 1 John i. 7-9.

Iscariot, men pass out of this world impenitent and therefore unrenewed. And it may be that they can only be redeemed from death by the ministries of death itself, only taught to hate and renounce their sins by being delivered into the hands of their sins. We who trust "the larger hope" do not altogether lose hope even for them, though we sigh and tremble as we think of the miseries they must inevitably endure before they can come to have any hope for themselves.

The sin unto death must involve all the horrors of death here or hereafter. But it is not even inevitable that these horrors should be postponed to a future state. Even those who can cherish no hope for the impenitent who die in their sins need not add to their burden the sorrowful conviction that all who sin the sin unto death perish everlastingly. Here, at least, in the life that now is, the gulf between death and life is not impassable. It has been crossed. "That wicked person" at Corinth, for example, whom St. Paul bade his brethren solemnly excommunicate from the Church, as one who had adjudged himself unworthy of eternal life, had manifestly sinned a sin unto death. He had cut himself off from life in Christ, and was to be cast out "as one dead." By his own act he had declared himself to be no longer a member of the body of Christ, because no longer animated by his spirit. And he is formally handed over to Satan "for destruction." But it is for the destruction "of the flesh" and of the fleshly mind. And the flesh is to be destroyed only "*that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*"<sup>1</sup> That happy day soon came. For, within a few months, St. Paul declares that the punishment of this wicked person is "sufficient"; that he is in danger of being swallowed up and swept away by the swelling waters of the very sorrow that has wrought

<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians v. 1-5.



life in him ; and that, as he has once more found life in Christ, he is at once to be restored to the fellowship of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

The sin unto death I therefore judge to be any sin which so separates us from the life of Christ that, before we can be restored to it, we must pass through the pangs and terrors of death, must be compelled to feel that we have lost *Him*, and, in *Him*, our life ; that we have placed obstacles in the way which make it impossible for us to reach *Him*, and very hard for *Him* to reach us. If this terrible conviction should breed godly sorrow in us, we may hope that Christ will break through every obstacle, that He will forgive us and comfort us even in this world. But if it breed in us only a proud and self-willed remorse, or, worse still, if it should leave us hard and cold and indifferent, we shall then have condemned ourselves to the horrors of "the second death," and, if saved at all, can only be "saved so as by fire."

On the whole, then—though I would be understood to speak on this mystery with the modesty and reserve which it demands, and am very far from supposing that I have reached a complete solution of it—I think we may assume that the sin unto death is not any single and enormous act of wickedness taken by itself ; but that it is rather a state of the soul, a state of separation from the life of God, which is the proper life of man, into which even those who have been quickened and redeemed may sink, and which is likely to reveal itself in their general bent and course of conduct, though it *may* come to a head in some decisive act which the Church cannot overlook. I think, too, we may be sure that those who are overwhelmed with grief and shame at the thought of having fallen into this sin are precisely those who have not committed it ; or that, at least, they are precisely those who, like the wicked person

<sup>1</sup> 2 Corinthians ii. 6-11.

at Corinth, are being cleansed from it. Their sorrow, like his, is an omen of life, of life everlasting.

III. But, besides the recognized difficulty, the Verse contains an *unrecognized* difficulty about *Prayer*. And did we not dread God more than we love Him, and care more to pry into the darkness than to walk in the light, I really do not see how it has come to pass that the threatening of this Verse has made so deep an impression upon us, while, so far as I can discover, its promise has absolutely made no impression at all.

Ever since St. John wrote his Epistle all the Church, if not all the world, has been anxious to know what the sin unto death is; but who has pondered and wrestled with *the prayer unto life*? Who has studied and acted on the wonderful and gracious words, “If any man see his brother sin a sin not unto death, *he shall ask, and God shall give him life for them that sin not unto death*”? Nay, which of us has so much as marked that there was any wonder in these most wonderful words, or any rebuke in them, or any encouragement? And yet what astonishing words they are! how pregnant both with encouragement and with rebuke!

When *we* see our brother sin, we are commonly stirred up to suspect, to censure, to dislike him; but which of us is stirred up to pray for him? And even if we do pray for him—pray that he may be taught to see and feel and confess his sins, or even pray that his sins may be forgiven him—yet which of us is bold enough to ask that he may have “life”—a life so full, so pure, so potent, that it will conquer and purge away all his sins; and to believe that, in answer to our prayer, God will give him life, or, in St. John’s still more emphatic idiom, give *us* life *for him*?

This, surely, is the true wonder of the passage, that it should hold so great a promise and that, nevertheless, we should have overlooked it; that God should have put so

gracious and singular a power into our hands, and that we should have made so little use of it, or even no use of it !

When we see our brother sin a sin of conceit, for example, or of self will, or of ill temper, or any one of the thousand sins which we admit not to be unto death, because, though inconsistent with the life of Christ, they do not wholly separate him from it, we are hurt and offended ; we hope that he will know better and do better some day ; and even to reach this point is held to be a stretch of Christian charity. But such poor charity as this leaves us far below the mark at which St. John would have us aim. According to him, the first and natural effect produced on us by the faults and sins we find it so hard not to resent should be to drive us to prayer—prayer, not for ourselves, but for our offending brother. He would have us ask that the life of Christ may so grow and unfold itself within him as to deliver him from his faults and sins. But which of us does that ? Which of us believes even that it is in our power to get life—more life and fuller—for him ?

Yet St. John assures us that it *is* in our power. If we ask life for the brother who has trespassed against us, God, says the Apostle, will give him life, nay, give us life for him ! Astonishing as the promise is, how could St. John but hold it to be true ? It is but a plain inference from the principles on which we have already heard him insist. This eternal life has been manifested to men that they may have it. It is God's will and intention that they should share in this life. Plainly, therefore, in asking life for an offending brother, we are asking a thing "according to his will." "And this is the confidence we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to his will, He heareth us."

Wonderful as the promise is, therefore, it is a fair and simple deduction from the first principles of the Gospel, at least of the Gospel according to St. John. And one thing is quite certain ; viz., that, if we believed it and

acted on it, it would give a strange vitality to that Christian "fellowship" on which the Apostle lays so much stress, though in our hands it is in no small danger of degenerating into a pretentious unreality. For if when we saw any member of the Christian community sin, instead of breaking out into censures and rebukes or cherishing toward him a silent ill-will and suspicion, we all with one consent began to pray for him, to ask life for him; and if in our whole manner to him we shewed that we believed God to have heard and answered our prayer, our fellowship with him in Christ would become a vigorous and sustaining reality both to him and to us. How could we but feel that "he had fellowship with us, and that our fellowship was with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ"?

This, indeed, might be one of the chief ways in which the promise would be fulfilled. For if the brother who had sinned, and was haunted by the consciousness of his sin, felt that the whole Christian community was praying for him; if he saw them behaving as if they knew they were answered, knew that God had given him life and expected to see him use it, might he not be constrained "to match the promise in their eyes," to meet their expectation, to respond to their love, to renounce and abandon his sin, and to rise into the very "life" they had asked for him?

The answer to prayer, the fulfilment of the gracious promise, would not, of course, be immediate and direct in every case. In some cases, no doubt, that answer would come through the very punishments which chastised the sin and quickened a longing for deliverance. But life, eternal life, is worth waiting for, worth suffering for. No answer to prayer is, in every case, immediate and direct. And if we believe it to be God's will that none should perish, but that all should have life everlasting, how can we doubt that, when we ask God for life, sooner or later, directly

or indirectly, "we shall have the petition we have desired of Him"?

IV. Another unrecognized difficulty of this Verse is that the Apostle declares every departure from the Divine Will to be a separation from the Divine Life, and yet admits that many of the sins which sever us from life are, nevertheless, not sins unto death. He bids us ask for life—as though life had been lost—for the very man whose sin he admits not to be fatal; and yet how should a man lose life and not die?

The difficulty meets us again in Verses 17 and 18, while here it is complicated by one of St. John's habitual idioms, and rendered still more difficult. "All unrighteousness is sin;" "whosoever is born of God doth not sin;" and yet "there is a sin not unto death." Taken together, these three phrases—which succeed one another in the Verses just cited, though in a different order to that in which I have arranged them—imply, that every wrong or unrighteous act separates us from the life of God—for "he that is born of God doth not sin;" and yet that every such separation from eternal life does not involve eternal death.

Now it would be easy to evade this difficulty, while seeming to remove it, by saying that just as there are many things which injure our physical life, which lower its power and lessen its scope, but which nevertheless are not fatal to it, so also, if there are some wounds which are fatal to our spiritual life, there are others from which it may and does recover. That, so far as it goes, is quite true, no doubt; but it does not really explain St. John's peculiar terminology, nor does it meet the difficulty his terminology suggests frankly and fully. He says, "whosoever is born of God sinneth not," and the phrase is not an exceptional, or even a rare, one in his writings. It recurs again and again, especially in Chapter iii. of this Epistle, and takes even such a positive and absolute form as this: "Whosoever is born



of God doth not commit sin; for *his* seed remaineth in him; and *he cannot sin*, because he is born of God.”<sup>1</sup> Yet, in the Verse before us, he speaks of those who have been born of God as sinning sins not unto death, and even as sinning sins which are unto death. But how should those sin who “cannot” sin?

The simple fact is that St. John, like St. Paul, held that in every one of us there are two natures, two selves, two men striving together for the mastery; the one born of God and walking after the spirit, the other coming of evil and walking after the flesh. St. Paul<sup>2</sup> called them the inward man and the outward man, and, again, the spiritual man and the carnal man, and spoke of them as fulfilling “the law of the mind” and “the law in the members.” St. John distinguished between that in us which is, and that which is not, born of God; between that in us which walketh in the light, and that which walketh in the darkness. Even we ourselves speak of the true self in us and the false self, or of the better nature and the worse, or of the ideal man and the actual man. The fact which underlies all these various terminologies is one and the same: viz., that as there is that in us which loves evil and does it, so also there is that in us which loves good and clings to it even when it cannot do it. Even when we are at our worst, even when we suffer the lower or baser self to rule in us, and do that which we know to be wrong, we are conscious of “a will to do good,” conscious at least of a something in us which protests against the evil while we do it and mourns over it when it is done, which will never consent to it or take part in it. And this we call our true self, our best self—*this* that will bear no part nor lot in any sin we commit. St. John and St. Paul word our conception in a different way indeed; but all that they add to it is (1) the affirmation that, when this inward and

<sup>1</sup> 1 St. John iii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Romans vii.

better self, or man, has been impregnated with the life of God, when it has laid hold of that eternal life which was manifested in Christ Jesus, it becomes capable of subduing, absorbing, transforming the lower nature which wars against it; and (2) the warning that, even when this eternal life has been quickened within us, unless we cherish it and walk by it, we may lose it—may grow hard and cold and indifferent, may even suffer the lower nature to conquer the higher and hold it in bondage, if not utterly and forever to destroy it by subduing it to its own base quality or likeness.

Whatever contradiction, or apparent contradiction, there may be in the terms they employ, therefore, or whatever allowance we may be disposed to make for the terms and idioms of their age, the fact which they set forth is quite familiar to us; it constitutes the very secret and mystery of our human nature. We feel in ourselves, the very strife which they describe; we recognize the victory they promise us, if we are true to the better self and to God, in them themselves and in thousands of our neighbours who share their spirit and are treading in their steps; and we see the terrible defeat and ruin against which they warn us, not only in Iscariot, in Demas, and in the excommunicated sinner of Corinth, but also, alas, in many of our fellows who did once walk well and stoutly in the ways of Christ, but have now fallen away from their life in Him. Even in those who have won the victory, and won it most conspicuously, while we recognize a nature or self that never gave consent to sin, we recognize also a nature which only too effectually moved them to do the thing they would not, so that even a Paul bemoaned himself as the very chief of sinners, and even a John, long after, he was “born of God,” could write, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

And it is in these experiences of our own, and of those

who were in Christ before us, that we find our best explanation of the sins which *are* unto death and of the sins which are *not* unto death, and come to understand how an inspired Apostle could affirm that that in us which is born of God cannot sin, and yet in the same breath confess that "if we say we have not sinned, we make God a liar." The better self, the better man in us—*this* is that in us which cannot sin, because it is born and quickened of God; the worse or lower self, the outward man of the flesh—*this* is that in us which commits sin, because as yet it is not redeemed from vanity and corruption, so that "the good we would we do not, and the evil which we would not, that we do." So long as this better self is gaining on, so long even as it is striving against, the lower unregenerate self, our sins are not sins unto death; but so soon as we cease from the strife with evil, and suffer the lower self to usurp an undisputed authority over us, we sin the sins which are unto death; we are no longer trying to obey the law of the mind; even the will to do good is no longer present with us.

S. Cox.

## THE HISTORICAL CHRIST OF ST. PAUL.

### II. FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

1 CORINTHIANS xi. 23–26.—We have now come to what has always appeared to us the most vital question in the whole field of apologetics—the genuineness of that narrative which St. Paul gives of the Last Supper. As we have already said, it is a test case; on our verdict upon it will depend our admission, or our denial, that the Christ whom St. Paul proclaimed was recognized by the Apostle himself as a Christ of history. But it is not merely, nor even mainly, on this ground that we attach apologetic importance to the Pauline

narrative of the Last Supper ; it is because, if this narrative is true, we are carried further back than the Apostolic age itself. If we have here a real historical incident, we have laid aside all second-hand testimony. We are no longer in the presence merely of the disciples of Jesus, however near they may have been to his person, and however conversant with his life ; we have found access to a testimony more direct and immediate still. We have come into the actual presence of the Christian Founder, have touched the hem of his garment, have heard his own utterances concerning Himself, and his own views concerning his mission. A document, undoubted even by the most sceptical, has put us in possession of certain words affirmed to have been uttered by the Founder of Christianity ; if that affirmation be true, we have passed altogether beyond the borders of indirect testimony, and are prepared to narrow the question of Christianity's truth or falsehood within the limits of the one inquiry, What did its Founder say of Himself ?

Notice two collateral points which, although incidental to the main subject, are of much interest to the Christian apologist. The first is the reference to the fact that Christ was *betrayed*. The reference is made in such a way as clearly to indicate that the act we now attribute to Judas Iscariot was thoroughly well known ; St. Paul does not say, "He was betrayed," he speaks of "the same night *in which* He was betrayed ;" the betrayal is only alluded to in order to mark the time of another occurrence. The second point is this note of time : "The same *night* in which He was betrayed." Here, again, it is taken for granted that the betrayal was *at night*, and that this fact also was well known to the Church. We recall the parallel in St. Matthew xxvi. 31, 34. We remember that, according to the testimony of our Gospels, the Son of Man went out *by night* from the observance of the Last Supper into the garden of Gethsemane ; that there, amidst the shadows, He passed his

hour of human agency ; and that immediately after emerging from his solitary meditation, He was surrounded by the company of the betrayer : the darkness of the inward hour seems to find its fitting mirror in the shadows of the outer night. We cannot help thinking that the fact of the Apostle having noticed so minute a circumstance lends a strong probability to the belief that the Christ on whom his thoughts were centred was a Christ of history.

Passing now to the main subject of the passage, we are confronted on the threshold by a very important question, What was St. Paul's motive in writing these words? Did he wish to prove what we are seeking to prove—the Divine institution of the Lord's Supper? Did he wish to tell the Corinthians what was the nature of that institution, why it was to be observed, or how it was to be celebrated? No such motives were in his mind. The Corinthians knew all about the Lord's Supper, and St. Paul was quite aware of the fact ; he speaks of it as something which he had already *delivered unto them*. It is clearly implied in Verse 26 (which is not Christ's utterance but Paul's), that the Corinthian Church was in the habit of celebrating this ordinance as a Divine institution. What, then, was St. Paul's motive in writing this passage? The key to the answer is furnished, we believe, in the opening words, "*I received from the Lord*," with a special emphasis upon the word "I." Let us understand the position of affairs. The Church of Corinth, relaxing the vigour of its discipline as to the conditions of ecclesiastical membership, had admitted to the Lord's table persons not qualified to be there. St. Paul wrote to recall them to a sense of their duty. But he felt at the outset that his authority to do so might be disputed. He felt that the Corinthians might ask what right a man had to legislate apostolically on the Lord's Supper when he himself had not been one of those apostles to whom the personal hand of the Master had given the bread and wine? Accordingly he



seeks to anticipate the objection at the very first. What he says in effect is this: "Do not think that I have no authority to admonish you, because I did not witness the first communion; I have received the communion elements from the hands of the Lord as directly as did any of the Apostles. I have not simply *delivered unto you* a message for whose authority I have had to trust to the testimony of others; I received it from the Lord. I was indeed born out of due time, but that misfortune has been compensated. I was not present at that communion feast which preceded the crucifixion; but did not the Master promise there to drink the fruit of the vine anew with his disciples in his Father's kingdom? I was present at the fulfilment of that promise. When I joined the communion of the visible Church, I felt in my inmost soul that the bread and wine of which I was partaker were blessed to me by the special unseen presence of Him whose visible presence had blessed it to the other Apostles. My authority therefore is not inferior to theirs."

We hold, then, that what St. Paul claimed to have received of the Lord was not a knowledge of the *facts* of the Communion; but the Communion itself. In this view we have taken an intermediate position between an extreme supernatural and an extreme rationalistic standpoint; and it is only fair to state in what respect our theory differs from each of these.

The extreme supernatural view, which perhaps comprehends the majority of orthodox Commentators, is the belief that St. Paul received in a supernatural dream or vision a knowledge of all the facts relating to the institution of the Lord's Supper; that he was ignorant of the narrative of that night until it was thus miraculously revealed. The adoption of this view would in no sense weaken the argument of this Section; the question for the apologist is, not whence Paul received his information, but whether his in-

formation be true to the facts of history. All the same, we cannot for a moment adopt such an opinion. It is contrary to the principle of Divine economy that a man should be informed supernaturally of what he can learn from his natural faculties. Waiving this question, it seems to us impossible that, even before his conversion, St. Paul should have been ignorant that the Christians gave such an account of the institution of this ritual observance. Between the alleged date of the resurrection of Christ and the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, there seem to have elapsed several years. They were years in which Christianity was much criticized by the Jewish nation. Is it credible that a leader of that nation never heard of the distinctive rite inaugurated by the Christian Founder until he was informed of its existence by a supernatural vision? We freely admit that the grammatical construction of the Verse appears to favour such a view; but every scholar knows that St. Paul's meaning cannot be reached by the simple process of parsing his sentences. We are not amongst those who seek to reduce the supernatural to a minimum; we would rather extend it into the sphere of law itself. We are actuated in this matter by no theological tendency, but by a purely judicial bias. Our objection to the theory that St. Paul learned supernaturally the institution and object of the Lord's Supper is founded solely on the belief, that such a theory removes the Apostle outside the circle of historical witnesses; and that, in so doing, it opens the door to that second or rationalistic theory to which we must now advert.

The rationalistic explanation of the passage before us is something like this. Paul was pervaded by the belief that he was in constant communion with his Lord. This abstract sentiment expressed itself one day in a concrete form. Paul had a natural dream, in which he seemed to see the Divine Being whom he loved, holding out to him the elements of bread and wine as symbols of communion.

and telling him that He had while on earth performed the same ceremony with the original disciples. The visions of the dream were to Paul realities ; and therefore it became to him a Divine command. He proceeded to institute, as a universal ordinance for the Church, that which had come to him only as an individual experience ; and what had been originally a vision of the night was crystallized into a rite of Christendom.

We think Mr. Hume has somewhere remarked that there is no opinion so absurd as not to have been held by some philosophers ; in the present instance, such a conviction is needed to reconcile us to the idea that the men who support this theory are serious. The refutation of it grows out of the passage itself. St. Paul says that, on the night of his betrayal, the Lord brake the bread and gave it to his disciples. These disciples at the moment of St. Paul's writing were probably all alive, with two exceptions—Judas Iscariot and James the son of Zebedee. Nay, this is to understate the case. St. Paul had been instituting the Lord's Supper in the Gentile Churches for the last fifteen or twenty years. Our English version : "*I have received of the Lord,*" is misleading ; it sounds as if the Apostle claimed to have obtained a new experience. It ought to be, "*I received of the Lord.*" The Apostle is speaking of an experience acquired in the far past, probably contemporaneous with his conversion. At that time all the disciples of the Last Supper, with the exception of Judas, were certainly alive. Now let us imagine that St. Paul's account of this matter had been the mythical embodiment of his own imagination. Let us suppose that there had never been a Last Supper, or that St. Paul had idealized the portrait of it ; or that, in point of fact, the Christian Founder had not uttered those words which the Gentile Apostle attributed to Him. What would have been the consequence ? Would not these disciples, to a man,

have risen to vindicate the historical accuracy of their own Christian tradition? The vindication would, for them, have been easy, and, for the Gentile Apostle, most crushing. They had only to say that they were never present at such a Supper, or that it was a common meal of hospitality unaccompanied by any mystic utterances of the Christian Founder. If they had said this, the name of Paul would have been handed down to posterity with that contempt and ridicule which are associated with those who have proved themselves the victims of fanaticism. And let us remember that, according to the negative school, the original disciples had the wish, if they had only possessed the power, thus to weaken the authority of the Gentile Apostle. Without admitting this, we are quite willing to grant, that in the first years of Christianity they were not at one with St. Paul as to the conditions of Church membership. On this account they would have looked with peculiar narrowness into St. Paul's view of the institution of Christian ordinances. Even after the writing of this Epistle, the leading men in the Church would have proved his account of the Last Supper to be false, had it not been incontrovertibly true. Peter and John, and perhaps James the son of Alphaeus, remained as living witnesses. Yet this account of St. Paul was accepted by all branches and parties of the Church, and has come down to us incorporated in those four Gospels which, whatever be said of their origin and authenticity, are recognized by the negative critics themselves as representatives of those phases of thought which pervaded the life of early Christendom.

We conclude, then, that the Pauline account of the Last Supper is the statement of a historical fact which cannot be doubted. No incident of history, whether sacred or profane, rests upon more indubitable evidence. But if so, the question remains, what is the value of such an incident? It may seem, perhaps, that its apologetic impor-



tance is inadequate to the trouble of proving its reality. To us its apologetic importance is simply vital, more vital in one sense than the celebrated Chapter (1 Cor. xv.) on the Resurrection. As we have already said, the admission of Paul's accuracy in this passage ushers us into the presence of the great witness—the Christian Founder Himself. If He uttered these words, we have got behind the Evangelists, behind the Gospels, behind the Epistles; we have come into the secret chamber where the Founder of Christianity may be heard, with his own lips, declaring the nature of his religion, and revealing his estimate of his work and mission. It is, therefore, a matter of vast importance to determine whether the words which are here undoubtedly uttered by Him are such words as we should have expected Him to utter were He the Christ of our Gospels.

Now let us observe, first of all, the manner of *this* Christ's teaching. It partakes strangely both of that manner which we find in our fourth Gospel, and of that which distinguishes the first three. The Gospel of St. John, indeed, seems from beginning to end to be absolutely based on the memory of this Last Supper. Our immediate impression in reading the Pauline narrative is that we are in the presence of a Christ of mysticism such as St. John delights to pourtray; and the fact that such an impression is created by so early a document is a strong refutation of the Tübingen theory that the first Christ of Christendom was a plain and practical Moralist. Yet we are equally struck by the fact of that resemblance which the Christ of St. Paul bears to the Christ of the first three Gospels. We have the same direct and abrupt utterance, seeming to come from one whose nature it is to command: "This do." What is more to the purpose, there is the same parabolic form so familiar to us in the synoptic Gospels: "This is my body for you"; "This cup is the new covenant in my



blood." The parabolic mode of speech comes to Him easily and naturally; and we feel that, if this is not the identical Christ of the Synoptists, the Synoptists must have constructed a Christ who should imitate the manner of the Pauline original.

Passing now from the manner to the matter of this utterance, we are struck with the fact that the Christian Founder is the subject of his own exhortation: "This do in remembrance of *Me*." We have here a reproduction in the earliest apostolic age of what our Gospels have taught us to consider an essential feature of the Master's teaching. The Christ whom we are accustomed to reverence is habitually the central figure in his own discourses: "Come unto *Me*"; "depart from *Me*"; "believe in *Me*"; "follow *Me*," are the phrases which constitute the key-notes of his teaching. The Christ of St. Paul, or rather the Christ who in St. Paul's Epistle speaks for Himself, exhibits precisely the same characteristic. He is conscious of approaching death; yet even in the act of death He feels his own personality to be that which gives vitality to his work, and that which will render his work perpetual. And let us observe here how, in the undoubted consciousness of Christ Himself, his death is recognized as the life of the world. We have pointed out in a previous Section, that the historical Christ of St. Paul was one who believed Himself to have a mission of salvation to perform, and who, through the power of his love for humanity, went forth voluntarily unto the sufferings which that mission involved. But here we have more than St. Paul's testimony; we have the direct testimony of the Christ whom he revered. The Founder of Christianity speaks in his own words, and in his own name; and we feel that for once at least we are lifted into the region of pure history. Yet the Christ who speaks here is found to be identical with the theological conception of the Epistles, and with the historical concep-

tion of the Gospels. He is, by his own admission, a Being who, through love, is prepared to die, who is ready to give his life for the world, and who asks the world in return never to let go the memory of his self-surrendering devotion. The personality revealed in these primitive words of institution contains the germ of every feature which marks the personality of the Christ of latest Christendom.

If we turn now to the claims advanced by this primitive Christ, we shall be still more surprised at the resemblance between the earliest and the latest conception. The Founder of Christianity here distinctly declares that He is Himself the originator of a covenant between God and man: "This cup is *the new covenant* in my blood." Have we seriously considered the boldness of this claim? It is far more than the simple claim to be prophet or inspired seer. The Jewish covenant was the most solemn thing in the universe, and the most fundamental fact in the universe; it was nothing less than the relation supposed to exist between the natural and the supernatural. Now imagine that in this nineteenth century a man, recognized to be of sound mind, were suddenly to stand forth and say: "I come to proclaim a new relation between the natural and the supernatural, which is to begin from this hour, and to have its first fruits in me." We shall have in that imagination a picture of the attitude in which Christ, at the Last Supper, stood to the Jewish nation. We shall be reminded, indeed, that the cases are not parallel. We shall be told that the Jews had been taught by their prophets to look for a new covenant, in other words for a new relation between the natural and the supernatural. Undoubtedly they had; but they had been taught to look for it as the result of a new order of things which should be ushered in by a reign of miracles and accompanied by a radical change in the hearts of men. It is one thing to believe in a prophecy; it is another thing

to believe that we have seen its accomplishment. If the Christian Founder had already proved his claim to be the inaugurator of a new covenant by performing deeds of miraculous power, and if that fact were admitted by those who reject our four Gospels, it would, indeed, be a waste of time to dwell upon the wonderfulness of the claim here advanced. But we are arguing with men who deny that the Founder of Christianity ever dreamed of being more than a Galilean peasant, endowed with those powers of natural common sense and those facilities of verbal expression which constitute the popular teacher. It is to such alone that we hold up the mirror of the Christ at the Last Supper. We say that, to one who believes that Christ's entire mission was to teach the Sermon on the Mount, there ought to be something very startling in the claim put forth by Him to be the origin and the ground of an altered relation between the natural and the supernatural, the cause of a new covenant between God and man. The old covenant had its historical birth in the days of Moses; but Moses never claimed to be its origin or ground or cause. His commands were issued under the formula, "Thus saith the Lord"; he never said, "Do this in remembrance of Me." The claim of the Christian Founder is unique, whatever view men may choose to take of his person. He has come to the moment of death, and He is aware of the fact; He has touched the hour of deepest human weakness, and at this hour He expresses a strength which no human potentate at the head of his armies has ever dared to claim. He declares Himself to be the new life of the world, or, which is the same thing, the life of a new world; the pouring out of his blood is to initiate a second covenant between God and man, to alter the relation between the human and the Divine. In Him all things are to be re-created; his life, in its moment of human weakness and in its hour of physical extremity, is to be the breath of a

second and a more glorious universe of whose being there shall be no end. He is Himself, through all time, to be looked back upon as the Founder of this new creation, and all the homage of its coming ages is to be concentrated in remembrance of Him.

But we have not yet exhausted the significance of this new covenant, as it appeared to the eyes of the Christian Founder. To reach the full force of the idea, we must inquire what was the old covenant. We shall find that question answered in Exodus xxiv. 8, where an account is given of its original institution. The ground of the old covenant is there said to be the sprinkling of blood. We wish to avoid here all reference to any distinctive theory of the Atonement; and, therefore, we shall keep to a statement which will be covered by all theories. The ground of the old covenant, as it was conceived by the Jews, was the offering up to Jehovah of a life which symbolized in its outward aspect the idea of sinlessness. The defectiveness of the covenant consisted in the fact that the idea of sinlessness was only symbolized, not expressed. The victim offered was not really pure; it was always tacitly implied that if a pure victim should ever be offered there would require to be a new covenant between God and man. In Isaiah lv. 3 we have the promise of an "everlasting covenant" which is to be offered to the human soul free from all conditions of legal obedience; but we learn, from Verse 5, that it is to be offered on the ground of a sinless life in Israel. If, then, any man should proclaim that he was the inaugurator of the new covenant, he would be doing neither more nor less than asserting his own sinlessness; in the eyes of the Jewish people such an act could admit of no other interpretation. Yet this is precisely the claim which is here advanced by the Christian Founder; it is not put into his mouth by way of theological interpretation; it is, in so many words,

advanced by Himself. "This cup is the new covenant in my blood"; He declares his own life, on the ground of its sinlessness, to be the inauguration and the origin of an altered relation between the natural and the supernatural. We have seen, in a former Section, that the Christ whom St. Paul believed in was conceived by him to be a sinless Being; but, in the passage before us, we are put beyond all doubt that the Pauline conception was based upon a fact of history. It was based upon the fact that the Christian Founder had, in the strongest terms, claimed to be sinless, and claimed on that account the intervention of Heaven. To the mind of St. Paul, as to the mind of modern Christendom, there was present that picture which is unique in the world's history—the portrait of a Man belonging to a race of all others the most impressed with the consciousness of human depravity, and standing Himself in that immediate presence of death which is wont to lay bare the secrets of all souls; yet, in the very midst of his race and in the very presence of death, declaring Himself, by a life of unblemished sinlessness, to have bridged the chasm between the human and the Divine.

G. MATHESON.

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*ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN INSCRIPTIONS IN  
THEIR BEARING ON OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY.*

VIII. DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH.

THE inscription that follows, translated by the Rev. A. H. Sayce from a tablet on which it is found both in Accadian and Assyrian, presents, it will be admitted, a degree of parallelism with the history of Genesis xix. sufficient to excite interest and curiosity. In its fragmentary state, making no mention of the names of the cities whose overthrow it records, it would perhaps be premature to affirm that it is



an actual reproduction of that history. I give Mr. Sayce's translation from *Records of the Past*, xi. 117.

"An overthrow from the midst of the deep there came,  
The fated punishment from the midst of heaven descended,  
A storm like a plummet the earth (overwhelmed),  
To the four winds the destroying flood like fire did burst,  
The inhabitants of the cities it had caused to be tormented; their  
bodies it consumed.  
In city and country it spread death, and the flames, as they rose,  
overthrew;  
Freeman and slave were equal, and the high places it filled.  
In heaven and earth like a thunderstorm it had rained; a prey it  
made.  
A place of refuge the gods hastened to, and in a throng collected.  
Its mighty (onset) they fled from, and, like a garment, it concealed  
mankind.  
They (feared) and death (overtook them),  
Their feet and hands (it embraced).

\* \* \* \* \*

Their body it consumed,  
. . . the city, its foundations it defiled,  
. . . in breath, his mouth he filled,  
As for this man, a loud voice was raised; the mighty lightning flash  
descended  
During the day it flashed; grievously it fell."

\* \* \* \* \*

It may be hoped that the remainder of the fragment will some day be discovered and interpreted. In the meantime what we have may provisionally be regarded as presenting at least a parallel to the Genesis history of the destruction of the cities of the plain. In the "man" who appears so abruptly in the last line but one Mr. Sayce finds a possible counterpart of Lot. He suggests with some probability that the expedition of Chedorlaomer, though it returned unsuccessful before the destruction, must have made the people of Assyria and Babylon interested in the cities which they had conquered. Tidings of the overthrow would naturally be

carried from the Jordan to the Euphrates by the travelling companies of Midianites or other traders.

### IX. BALAAM THE SON OF BEOR.

No direct light is thrown by the inscriptions on the personal history of the false prophet who comes into so prominent a position in the history of Numbers xxii.—xxiv. His name is not found in them. The only mention of his dwelling-place is found on the monolith of Shalmaneser II., who records his victory over the "city of Pethor upon the river Sagura on the hither" (*i.e.* Eastern) "side of the Euphrates" (*R. P.*, iii. 93); Schrader, however, gives the "further" or Western side. (*Keilinschr.*, pp. 141, 220). Indirectly, however, we find much that throws light upon the prophet's character and conduct. He appears on the scene as coming "from Pethor which is by the river (*i.e.* the Euphrates) of the land of the children of his people" (Num. xxii. 5). In his own utterance he describes the region more definitely; he has been brought "from Aram (— Syria or Mesopotamia) out of the mountains of the East" (Num. xxiii. 7), and this points to the higher rather than the lower valley of the Euphrates. In Deut. xxiii. 4 the vaguer Aram passes into the more definite Aram-Naharaim, the Syria of the two rivers or, as we translate it, Mesopotamia. So far, therefore, we are at least carried to the region from which the inscriptions come.

Of Pethor, as has been said, nothing is definitely known. The name has however been explained as derived from, or connected with, the Hebrew *pathar*—to "open" or "reveal" (the word rendered "interpret" in Gen. xl. 8, 16, 22; xli. 8, 12, 13, 15), and as pointing therefore, as a technical word, to the head-quarters of soothsayers of the Magi type, famous for their knowledge of Divine things, the Delphi or Dodona of Mesopotamia. It has been identified

with the *Phathusæ* of Greek writers, and these with a site now known as *Anah*, an Arabic word of the same signification as Pethor (Knobel, quoted by Rev. S. Clark in *Speaker's Commentary*, i. p. 739). It will be admitted that these facts, even if they do not form a very solid basis for a superstructure of theory, are at least singularly suggestive. The Moabites and Midianites send to the oracle which was even more than an oracle, able to sway and guide the Divine will as well as to reveal it. They ask Balaam, the most famous priest-prophet of the oracle, to come to their help, as the Thebans in the old *Œdipus* legend sent for Tiresias (*Soph. Œd.-Tyr.*, i. 290-315), as the Athenians in the time of Solon sent for Epimenides of Crete (*Diog. Laert.*, i. 3, 10). It would be almost a superfluous task to dwell on the parallel which Balaam, from this point of view, presents to the soothsayers, diviners, magicians, and monthly prognosticators who at a later date made the word Chaldæan a synonym for astrologers and magicians. (*Isa.* xlv. 25, xlvii. 13; *Dan.* ii. 2, iv. 7). It is more to our present purpose to note that the ritual of Assyria appears to have abounded in formulæ of imprecation such as Balaam was invited to utter, in the belief that they would be potent for evil against the armies of Israel. Some of these, translated by the Rev. A. H. Sayce (*R. P.*, iii. 144), and by M. François Lenormant (*La Magie chez les Chaldéens*, p. 59), seem almost to have rivalled the memorable curse of Ernulphus of Rochester in their details of malignity. Like the tablets that record the traditions of the Creation and the Deluge, they seem to have belonged to the earliest period of Assyria, and though copied and translated (they are found both in Accadian and Assyrian) by the scribes of Assurbanipal, they are referred by Mr. Sayce to the reign of Sargon, an Assyrian king of the 16th century B.C.

Of these I give such illustrative extracts as seem sufficient.

"The beginning—The baneful charm, like an evil demon, acts  
 against the man,  
 The voice *that defiles* acts upon him,  
 The maleficent voice acts upon him.  
 The baneful charm is a spell that originates sickness,  
 This man the baneful charm strangles like a lamb,  
 His god in his flesh makes a wound,  
 His goddess mutual enmity brings down,  
 The voice *that defiles* like a hyæna covers him and subjugates  
 him.

\* \* \* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> Evil is to the substance of his body,  
 Whether (it be) the curse of his father,  
 Or the curse of his mother,  
 Or the curse of his elder brother,  
 Or the bewitching curse of an unknown man.  
 Spoken (is) the enchantment by the lips of Hea.  
 Like a signet may he be brought near,  
 Like garden herbs may he be destroyed,  
 Like a weed may he be gathered for sale.

\* \* \* \* \*

May the man, by the enchantment, with eldest son and wife  
 (By) sickness, the loss of the bliss of prosperity, of joy and  
 gladness,  
 (By) the sickness which exists in a man's skin, a man's flesh, a  
 man's entrails,  
 Like this weed be plucked and  
 On that day the consuming fire-god consume."

Side by side with these we have formulæ of exorcism to  
 avert evil, and of direct benediction (*R. P.*, i. 133).

"From the burning spirit of the entrails which devours the man,  
 from the spirit of the entrails which works evil, may the king of  
 heaven preserve, may the king of earth preserve.

\* \* \* \* \*

"From wasting, from want of health, from the evil spirit of the  
 ulcer, from spreading quinsy of the gullet, from the violent ulcer,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Sayce refers this and the following anathema to have for their object  
 the sorcerer whose spell is to be averted, but they are of course not the less  
 illustrative of the practice and of the character of the execrations.

from the noxious ulcer, may the king of heaven preserve, may the king of earth preserve.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

"On the sick men, by means of sacrifices, may perfect health shine like bronze; may the sun-god give this man life; may Merodach the eldest son of the deep (give him) strength, prosperity (and) health; may the king of heaven preserve, may the king of earth preserve."

It will be admitted, I think, that these extracts throw a new light on the words with which Balak addresses the prophet of Pethor: "Come now, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me . . . for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed" (Num. xxii. 6).

The annals of Tiglath-Pileser (*R. P.*, v. 26) furnish, if possible, a still more striking illustration of Assyrian anathemas. The curse is pronounced on the man who shall dare to efface the king's inscriptions.

"Anu and Vul, the great gods my lords, let them consign his name to perdition; let them curse him with an irrevocable curse; let them cause his sovereignty to perish; let them pluck out the stability of the throne of his empire; let not offspring survive in the kingdom; let his servants be broken; let his troops be defeated, let him fly vanquished before his enemies. May Vul in his fury tear up the produce of his land. May a scarcity of foods and of the necessities of life afflict his country. For one day may he not be called happy. May his name and his race perish in the land."

It is a possible explanation of the presence of an officer bearing the title of Rab-Mag = chief of the Magi (Gesenius), or chief priest (Sir H. Rawlinson), among the Chaldæan princes of Jeremiah xxxix. 3, that he attended the armies of Nebuchadnezzar as the augurs attended those of Rome, in his religious character, and for the purpose of pronounc-



ing imprecations like those which Balak expected from Balaam.

It may be added that other fragments of Accadian religious poems furnish suggestive parallels to the aspiration which at first seems so strange as coming from the lips of one in whom the greed of gain, characteristic of his class, was so dominant: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his" (Num. xxiii. 10). In that early form of religious faith, the earliest, perhaps of this world's revealed creeds, the hope of immortality was not absent. There also, amid whatever corruptions of a yet more primeval truth, there were those who looked for something more than "transitory promises." Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees, and afterwards Moses amid the wisdom of the Egyptians, must have been cradled in the belief of a life beyond the grave. Thus we have (*R. P.*, iii. 134) prayers for the soul of a dying man.

"Like a bird may it fly to a lofty place!  
To the holy hands of its God may it ascend.

\* \* \* \* \*

The man who is departing in *glory*,  
May his soul shine radiant as brass.  
To that man . . . .  
May the sun give life!  
And *Marduk*, eldest son of heaven,  
Grant him an abode of happiness!"

A third fragment gives the picture of "the death of the righteous," such as may have been in the prophet's mind.

"Bind the sick man to heaven, for from the earth he is being  
torn away,  
Of the brave man who was so strong, his strength has departed,  
Of the righteous servant, the force does not return.  
In his bodily frame he lies dangerously ill,  
But ISHTAR who in her dwelling is grieved concerning him  
Descends from her mountain unvisited of men.

To the door of the sick man she comes.

The sick man listens ;

Who is there ? who comes ?

It is Ishtar, daughter of the moon-god SIN,

It is the god . . . son of Bel.

It is Marduk, son of the god . . .

They approach the body of the sick man.

\* \* \* \* \*

They bring a *khisibta* <sup>(1)</sup> from the heavenly treasury,

They bring a *sisbis* from their lofty storehouse ;

Into the precious *khisibta* they pour bright liquor.

That righteous man, may he now rise on high !

May he shine like that *khisibta* !

May he be bright as that *sisbis* !

Like pure silver may his garment be shining white ;

Like brass may he be radiant !

To the sun, greatest of the gods, may he ascend !

And may the sun, greatest of the gods, receive his soul

Into his holy hands."

Hardly less striking is the harmony between the stress laid on the mystic number seven in Balaam's reiterated injunctions, "Build me here seven altars and prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams" (Num. xxiii. 1, 14, 29), and the prominence given to that number in the Accadian liturgical fragments.

Thus we have in a penitential hymn translated by Mr. Fox Talbot (*R. P.*, iii. 136):

"O my god ! my sins are seven times seven !

O my goddess ! my sins are seven times seven !"

Or again in a fragment (*R. P.*, iii. 143), which Mr. Talbot presents as the song of the seven spirits :

"They are seven ! they are seven !

In the depths of ocean they are seven !

In the heights of heaven they are seven !"

<sup>1</sup> The *khisibta* would seem from the context to have been a drinking cup : the *sisbis* a radiant garment given to those who were admitted to the company of the blessed.

The same mystic number is found in another tablet of exorcism (*R. P.*, iii. 143) for a sick man.

“The god . . . shall stand by his bedside,  
Those seven evil spirits <sup>(1)</sup> he shall root out; and shall expel  
them from his body,  
And those seven shall never return to the sick man again.”

and again in the Accadian poem on these seven evil spirits, *R. P.*, ix. 143.

It has been not seldom noticed by commentators (*e.g.*, Mr. Clark in the *Speaker's Commentary*), that the figurative language in which Balaam describes the vision of the future glory of the chosen people: “How goodly are thy tents O Jacob, and thy tabernacles O Israel! as the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters” (*Num.* xxiv. 5, 6), embodies his recollections of the scenery of Mesopotamia rather than the impressions made on him by the rocks and narrow gorge-like *wadies* which he saw from the heights of Moab. Passages from the inscriptions of Assyrian kings, painting a like scenery, are therefore of the nature of parallelisms, and it may be interesting to quote a few of them.

(1) From the “bull” inscription of Sargon at Khorsabad (*R. P.*, xi. 19). “Above the valley which is at the foot of the mountains, to replace Nineveh, I founded a town, and I gave it the name of Dur-Sarkin. There I planted a variegated forest reviving the memory of Mount Amanus, which contains all the different kinds of trees in Syria, and all the plants growing on the mountains.”

(2) From an inscription of Tiglath-pileser I., translated by Sir H. Rawlinson (*R. P.*, v. 22). “The pine, the . . . , and the *algum tree*, these trees which under the former kings my ancestors they had never planted, I took them from the

<sup>1</sup> *Comp. Matt.* xii. 45; *Luke* viii. 2.

countries which I had rendered tributary, and I planted them in the groves of my own territories, and I *brought* fruit trees; whatever I did not find in my own country I took and placed in the groves of Assyria."

(3) From an inscription of Ashur-akh-hal, one of the ancient kings of Assyria, translated by Mr. Fox Talbot (*R. P.*, vii. 17). "The former city of Calah . . . had fallen into decay: that city I built again. And I dug a canal from the upper Zab river, and I gave it the name of the Stream of Fertility. And I planted beautiful trees along its banks, and fruit-trees, the herbs of every kind, and vines."

The hanging gardens of Babylon which at a later date were the wonder of Greek travellers, reported to have been constructed by Nebuchadnezzar (*Diod. Sic.*, ii. 10), that his queen, of Median birth, might find the scenery of her native valleys reproduced within the precincts of her palace, furnish another illustration of the same practice. Such "a paradise," which the Lord had planted, came before the prophet's glance as a natural emblem of the future beauty and order of the tabernacles of Israel.

In yet another symbol, in which most interpreters trace undefined expectations of the nature afterwards known as Messianic, we may note the influence of Assyrian symbolism: "I shall see him but not now; I shall behold him but not nigh; there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel" (*Num.* xxiv. 17). Widely prevalent as was the thought that stars were at once the signs and the heralds of mighty rulers, as seen in the traditions connected with the births of Alexander the Great, Mithridates, and Julius Cæsar, there can be little doubt that the belief had its origin in the astrology of Chaldæa. So in the inscriptions of Nabonidus (*R. P.*, v. 146) the moon is addressed as "king of the gods of heaven and earth, and of the stars upon stars which dwell in heaven," and the same symbol (a six-rayed star) is used both for a star and a god;

and in an Accadian hymn (*R. P.*, xi. 132) a sacred mountain is described, "like the star of heaven it is a prophet and filled with sheen." Still more striking is the parallelism of Tiglath-Pileser's description of himself as "the ruling constellation: the powerful, the lover of battle" (*R. P.*, v. 13).

What has been said as to the probable position of Balaam as a Mesopotamian prophet throws at least some light on the substance of the great prediction of Numbers xxiv. 17-24. That prediction, uttered as it was against his will, and under the constraint of an inspiration which he could not resist, was something more than a forecast drawn from what came within the horizon that lay before his mental gaze. But with him as with other prophets, though the horizon was widened, the standpoint of the prophet remained the same, and what we note as the characteristic feature in his utterance is the prominence given, as at that time and in that region it would naturally be given, to the power of Assyria. Moab, Ammon, and the children of Sheth (the children of noise, the tumultuous ones, as in Jer. xlviii. 45), are to pass under the sway of the sceptre that is to rise out of Israel. Amalek, the first of nations, is to perish for ever. The Kenites are to hold their rock fortresses for a time, and then the might of Asshur is to prevail and to carry them away captive, as in fact it did when the Rechabites, who were of Kenite origin, were driven from their homes by the Chaldeans who had succeeded to the inheritance of the Assyrian Monarchy, and carried into captivity (Jer. xxxv. 11; 1 Chron. ii. 55; Ps. lxxi. described in the LXX. as a "hymn of the sons of Jonadab, the first who were led away captive"). In the dim distance he sees that the pride of Asshur and of all the kindred race of Eber (Gen. x. 21, 22) should in its turn be brought low by some power from the west, "ships from the coast of Chittim" (Cyprus, or generally the western regions of the Mediterranean), yet hardly within the range of his vision. If we accept the



views of some scholars (Movers, *Phön.*, ii. 2, 210; Gesenius, *Thes.*; Furst, *Lex.*; W. L. Bevan in Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, art. *Chittim*), that the isles of Chittim derived their name from fugitive colonies of the Hittites, we may perhaps connect the prophet's language with that of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser I., whose curse has been quoted above, who describes himself as having subdued "rebellious tribes of the Kheti" (*R. P.*, v. 12) and smitten their city Carchemish (*Ibid.*, p. 18). As the same king describes himself repeatedly as having "trampled upon the whole Magian world," and especially those of Nairi (Mesopotamia) (*Ibid.*, pp. 12, 17, 18), from which Balaam came, and was in this respect carrying out the policy of his predecessors, we may perhaps see how "the coasts of Chittim" rose before the prophet's thoughts, and trace in his language something analogous to the predictive formula:

"Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor."

[*"Rise, thou avenger, from our bones at last."*]

Further light is thrown on the prediction, as will be seen in the next section, by the inscriptions of an Egyptian king of this period.

#### X. ACHAN AND CHUSHAN RISHATHAIM.

The history of Israel on its settlement in Canaan presents at least one point of contact with that of Babylon, and shews that that city was becoming famous for its commerce and manufactures. When Jericho was taken, the greed of Achan was attracted by "two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight," but chiefly, as the best prize of all the spoil, by a goodly Babylonish garment (literally a "garment of Shinar," Josh. vii. 21). Then, as at a later date, it might be said that "Haran, and Canneh, (- Calneh) and Eden, and Sheba and Asshur," were "merchants in all sorts of things, in blue clothes and broided

work, and in chests of rich apparel, bound with cords, and made of cedar" (Ezek. xxvii. 23, 24). And probably then, as in the days of Ezekiel, the Tyrians were the medium through which these fabrics found their way to the inhabitants of Canaan. Of the high reputation gained by them we have an interesting record in the inscription known as that of the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser (*R. P.*, v. 42), in which that king records the tribute which he received from Merodach-pal-Ibtar of the country of the Sukhiim (nomadic tribes in the south-west of Babylonia) as including "silver, gold, pitchers of gold, tusks of the wild bull," and "garments of many colours and linen." It is a not improbable conjecture that Joseph's "coat of many colours" (Gen. xxxvii. 3) and the "prey of divers colours of needle-work, meet for the necks of them that divide the spoil" (Jud. v. 30), on which Sisera's mother was counting, and the "scarlet and other delights," and "ornaments of gold upon their apparel," with which Saul adorned the women of Israel (2 Sam. i. 24), came from the same looms. Their fame kept its ground for fifteen centuries, and the younger Pliny (*Hist. Nat.*, viii. 48), records "*colores diversos picture vestium interere Babylon maxime celebravit, et nomen imposuit.*" If the Vulgate "*pallium coccineum*" represents a Jewish tradition, it indicates that a bright scarlet or crimson was the dominant colour.

The annals of the Judges, however, bring the history of Israel into more direct contact with the great powers of the north. The first of the invaders who oppressed them after their settlement in Canaan is described as Chushan Rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia (Hebrew, Aram Naharaim—Aram of the two rivers). It is disappointing that, so far as discoveries have as yet gone, no name resembling this has been found in any of the inscriptions. Probably, as often happens in the intercourse between nations speaking different languages, the name, as it now meets us, is a variation,

more or less distorted, of some Chaldæan original, the distortion being motivated by the tendency to use a form which is more familiar to the ear or gives something like a meaning. Taking this view, Sir H. Rawlinson and M. Lenormant look upon it as a corrupt form of the name of an Assyrian king, Assur-rish-ilim, or Asshur-rish-ishi (Len. *Anc. Hist.*, i. 117). Of the name as it stands, Chushan reminds us of Cush, the traditional father of Nimrod (Gen. x. 8), and Rishathaim may mean "twofold wickedness" or "two victories" or "two Governments" (Furst, *Lex.*). The former word appears in the prayer of Habakkuk as the name of a region there connected with Midian (Hab. iii. 7). Of the presence of the Chaldæans in these regions as invading and plundering we have traces in Job i. 17; and the names of some of the kings of Edom about this period, Bela the son of Beor, Hadad, and Saul of Rehoboth (Gen. xxxvi. 32, 35, 37) indicate an Aramæan origin. The Egyptian kings of an earlier period, Thothmes III. (B.C. 1600), and Amenophis II. (B.C. 1566), record in their inscriptions expeditions against the Rutennu (—Syrians) of Mesopotamia, and the Kheta (Hittites), which led them to Asshur, Babel, Nineveh, and Shinar, and the invasion of Chushan Rishathaim may have been an episode in this prolonged warfare. It is noticeable that these records speak of a naval as well as military warfare, and it is probable that the ships were manned by Phœnicians and by men of Cyprus (Canon Cook, in *Speaker's Commentary*, i., pp. 456–459). Indications of an Egyptian navy used in warfare are found at a somewhat later period (B.C. 1200), in the annals of Rameses III. (*R. P.*, vi. 31).

"I made for thee (Amen-Ra, the king of the gods) galleys, transports, and ships of war, with soldiers, equipped with their arms, on the Great Sea (= the Mediterranean). I gave them captains of the bowmen, and captains of galleys, provided with numerous crews without number, to bring the things of the land of Taha (=

Northern Palestine) and the hinder parts of the earth to thy great treasures in Uas (= Western Thebes)."

Looking to these latter facts we may perhaps see in Balaam's mention of "the ships from Chittim," that are to break the power of Asshur, a reference to this as a new form of attack from the old hereditary enemy of Assyria, using the ships and seafaring population of Cyprus as a fresh and formidable weapon. Commonly the prediction has been thought to have found its fulfilment in the expeditions of Alexander the Great, and later on in those of the Romans: but it would be quite in accordance with the analogy of other historical prophecies to assume that here also there might be both an earlier and a later accomplishment, the one the pledge and earnest of the other: the one within the horizon of the prophet's gaze, the other beyond it.

E. H. PLUMPTRE.

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### CHRIST'S PROPHECIES OF HIS OWN DEATH.

I HAVE heard even the most sincere believers in our Lord's resurrection and Divinity express grave doubts whether the account given in our Gospels of his own predictions of his death on the cross, and of his resurrection, are consistent with the admitted dismay and general doubt into which the crucifixion actually threw the apostles; and while even the most earnest believers feel this difficulty, the anti-supernaturalists, of course, go further and further every day in their use of the argument from "anachronism," and their rejection of everything, even in the oldest of the Gospels, which implies that the future was ever in any degree really present to the mind of Jesus. M. Ernest Havet has just been writing an essay in the *Revue des Deux*

*Mondes*, in which he maintains that even the words of our Lord, used in the institution of the Communion Service, were obviously unhistorical, and were borrowed by the evangelists from St. Paul, M. Havet's reason (which he has not as yet published) no doubt being that these words imply the clearest possible foresight of the event of the following day, and also of the effect that event would have in forming the basis of the most sacred act of Christian worship for the Church in the years to come. In precisely the same spirit M. Havet is inclined to reject as unhistorical our Lord's denunciation of the Pharisees, which implies, to his mind, another "anachronism," a breach between the disciples of Jesus and formal Judaism, which he regards as impossible till long afterwards; and he appeals to Gamaliel's moderate counsels when the persecution of Peter and John took place, to shew that the Pharisees were disposed rather to deal leniently with the disciples of Jesus, than to regard them as their own special antagonists. In very much the same fashion, I apprehend, the later historians of the nineteenth century, if they should have but a brief outline of the events it contains, might demonstrate the gross "anachronism" in the supposition that Mr. Gladstone, after writing and speaking so much in favour of the English Church and of the faith of that Church, had first taken away its chief possessions in Ireland, and next facilitated the entrance of atheists and agnostics into the House of Commons. There is nothing more characteristic of true history than what the ultra-sceptics call obvious "anachronisms." What was it which made St. Paul, who, as he himself boasted, was "a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee," the most ardent of all the antagonists, not merely of Pharisaism, but of Judaism itself, so soon as he learnt to believe that Judaism had been fulfilled in the Gospel of Christ? Of course it was that very side of St. Paul which had previously made him exhaust



all the spiritual resources of Pharisaism before he found that in order to live truly, even as a Pharisee, he must live a life which reached far beyond Pharisaism—one in which true Pharisaism ultimately found its euthanasia? And that which brought the disciple to his conflict with Pharisaism—namely, his ardent desire to live the Jewish life truly—must have brought the Master to the same conflict earlier and with greater force. The very resolve of Jesus to which M. Havet refers, I mean the resolve to go first “to the lost sheep of the House of Israel,” “not to take the children’s bread and cast it to the dogs,” was the natural and necessary antecedent of the deep conviction that “many shall come from the east and from the west, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness.” Indeed, was it not the faith of a Roman centurion, who was recommended to our Lord by Jews for his generosity in building the Jews a synagogue, which first led to Christ’s remark, that He “had not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” What, indeed, could better prepare for a true judgment on the comparative openness of the Jewish and Gentile minds for Divine truth, than that exclusive mission to the Jews, which revealed, first to the Master, and then to the great disciple, what it was that the Jews lacked? (As for Gamaliel’s plea in favour of toleration, one must remember that it was offered to a Sadducee high priest, and was the plea of the natural leader of the hierarchical Opposition.)

Now the supposed “anachronism” in our Lord’s anticipation of the break-up of the Jewish monopoly of revelation, at the very time when He was jealous of expending any of his Divine resources on those who were not of the fold of Israel, seems to me to offer a very instructive parallel to the other supposed “anachronism”—the anticipation of his own death and resurrection at a time

when his disciples were so little prepared to understand his meaning, that they remembered afterwards that they had questioned one with another "what the rising from the dead should mean." There was no true anachronism in either case; nothing but that superficial paradox, which, as I have said, is one of the commonest criteria of genuine history. The denunciations of Pharisaism all rose out of our Lord's desire to keep to the spirit of the purest Pharisaism, and not to let the forms overload and suffocate the spirit. He took the horror of defilement in its deepest sense, and asked whether it was "the unwashen hands," and the things which entered into men, which defiled them, or rather evil thoughts and that which came out of men that defiled them. He took the spirit of humility and sacrifice in its deepest sense, and asked whether it was public humiliation and ostentatious sacrifice, or inward contrition and private penitence, which won the grace of God. Thus it was the value of our Lord for the reality, of which Pharisaism was only the symbol, that led to his denunciation of the outward form from which the heart was wanting.

And exactly in the same way, as it seems to me, we may explain the case of the supposed "anachronism" in relation to our Lord's prophecy of his own death and resurrection—though here of course we cannot ignore the supernatural prescience which is also present. There is no anachronism at all in the order of thought, but a very close moral connexion of a similar kind. The first plain mention of our Lord's sufferings and death was, as everybody knows, elicited at some spot near Cæsarea Philippi, by Peter's profession of his personal belief that Jesus is "the Christ." The instant Peter makes that confession, Jesus, we are told by St. Mark, probably the earliest evangelist, "charged them that they should tell no man," well knowing that as yet their idea of Christ was a totally false one, and would

lead, if they spoke of it, to boasts entirely inconsistent both with what Christ really was, and was to be, and with what He wished to teach them. "And He began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And He spake that saying openly" [plainly, without metaphor or any vagueness capable of misconstruction, is, I suppose, St. Mark's meaning in the word *παρρησίᾳ*]. "And Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him. But when He had turned about and looked on his disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. And when He had called the people unto Him with his disciples, He said, Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."

Here it seems to me that there is a very distinct explanation of the ground of what is regarded as the "anachronism" in the order of thought. For the first time Christ finds his apostles thinking of Him as the true Messiah. He forbids them to publish that belief; assures them that it is true, but that it means shame and death before glory of any kind; and then immediately, and publicly, He begins in his teaching, even to the multitude, to connect his own career and that of all who would follow Him, with self-denial, suffering, the loss of life and all that life counts dear. In other words, the moment He finds that his disciples have begun to believe in his true spiritual power and glory, He commences that long course of lessons of which the drift is to try to impress on them that true spiritual power and glory is, for Him and all who would follow Him, indissoluble from all that seems least

like earthly power or glory. And let me recall how often, and emphatically, the same lesson is enjoined. No sooner have the three most trusted of his apostles seen the vision in which Jesus appeared transfigured and engaged in conversation with other shining figures, which they held to be those of Moses and Elijah, and heard a voice proclaiming Him the Son of God, than, as they come down the hill-side, Christ again impresses upon them not to tell others the vision "till the Son of man shall be risen from the dead," and then goes on to warn them "how it is written of the Son of man, that He must suffer many things and be set at nought." Immediately after this, St. Mark states that they "passed through Galilee, and He would not that any man should know it. For He taught his disciples, and said unto them, that the Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him, and after that He is killed, He shall rise the third day; but they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask Him;" and again, as if He could not sufficiently enforce his view of what the Messiah's glory really involved in the way of humiliation and suffering, St. Mark represents Him as once more almost immediately reiterating, that if any man desires to be great "the same shall be last of all, and the servant of all." And thenceforward the saying about the first that shall be last, and the last first, seems ever on his lips. Soon after this the final journey to Jerusalem begins. And as they go up to Jerusalem, "Jesus went before them and they were amazed, and as they followed, they were afraid. And He took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen to Him, saying, Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles: and they shall mock Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him; and the third day He shall rise again." Yet

no sooner, apparently, are the words out of his mouth—at least the narrative of St. Mark so represents it—than the sons of Zebedee come to Him with the request to sit, one on his right hand and the other on his left, in his glory. The word “glory” strikes the note of their expectation; and what is our Lord’s reply? It is to ask them if they are prepared to suffer as He is going to suffer, and to prophesy that they shall suffer as He is going to suffer; and further, to teach not only the two ambitious apostles, but all of them, that true “glory” for them is to be servants of all, “for even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many.” When Jesus reaches Jerusalem, and has made what is called the triumphant entry, He immediately endeavours to obliterate the sense of exultation which this probably caused to his apostles, by telling the parable of the Lord of the Vineyard, who having sent servant after servant to obtain the fruits of his vineyard, at last sent his own son, whom the husbandmen slay that the vineyard may be theirs. And then at the feast in Bethany, our Lord deepens the sense of coming calamity by assuring his disciples that the ointment poured upon Him is “to anoint his body for the burying.” Moreover, at his last passover, He prophesies the betrayal of Judas, the denial of Peter, and the scattering of all his disciples, besides instituting the great memorial service in which He speaks of his own body and blood about to be offered, as the bread and wine of life, and as voluntarily bestowed for the renewal of all who trust in Him.

Now I have taken all this summary exclusively from the Gospel of St. Mark, because even the extreme sceptics of to-day regard St. Mark’s as the oldest of the Gospels, and attach more historical importance to its statements than to those of any other. I think they are right in this estimate for a double reason—first, that St. Mark ignores entirely



the accounts given in the other Gospels of the birth and Divine origin of Jesus, and that all the best manuscripts of St. Mark leave the story of the resurrection at its very outset without any of the details embodied in St. Paul's account; and next, that, in the Galilean portions of the narrative especially, there are a great number of touches apparently due to the clearest personal memory, which no other Gospel contains—such touches I mean as the remark that there were also with the boat in which our Lord passed over the lake when He stilled the storm, “other little ships”—or the recollection of the Hebrew words in which our Lord addressed the daughter of Jairus, “*Talitha cumi*,” with the statement that she was of the age of twelve years—or the remark made to our Lord before the feeding of the five thousand, that two hundred denarii would hardly buy food for the multitude (a remark which only St. John besides reports), as well as a great number of other touches of the same kind, all of them tending to shew that either an eye-witness had recorded these touches, or that they were deliberately invented by a writer who wanted to paint up a faded picture. This last was the view once taken of St. Mark's Gospel by rationalistic critics, but latterly it has been given up even by the most sceptical, chiefly, I think, because they value the negative evidence of the Gospel as regards the opening and close of our Lord's career, more than they distrust the touches of local colour to which I have referred. And it is obvious that the two sets of characteristics must be estimated together. A painter anxious to make the most of our Lord's career for pictorial purposes, would never have rushed into the middle of his subject as St. Mark does, without any notice of Christ's birth, childhood, or origin; and would certainly not have broken it off (unless through some cause over which he had no control) at the very point at which his triumph over death was to be recounted. And even if we suppose that

the fragmentary close was due to some unexpected interruption of the writer's labours, its abrupt opening seems altogether inconsistent with the plan of a restoring and retouching artist. Moreover, the peculiar touches themselves are seldom really in any artistic sense *picturesque*. The mention of the "green" grass on which the five thousand were seated when fed by Jesus, is so; but most of the others read more like the matter of fact tokens of accurate memory than the touches of a beautifying artist. Thus St. Mark records that when James and John were called they left their father Zebedee in the ship "with the hired servants," a particular mentioned by no other evangelist, and quite without picturesque effect. So again in the mention of the manner in which the man sick of the palsy was got into the house where Jesus was in Capernaum, in spite of the crowd which blocked the entrance, St. Mark says "*they uncovered the roof where He was; and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay,*" while St. Matthew does not mention the mode of getting at Jesus at all, and St. Luke only says (probably deriving and abbreviating his account from the elder evangelist), "*They went upon the house-top and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus;*" so that here again St. Mark appears just to incorporate a rude fragment of fact, namely, that they broke up the roof before they could make room for letting down the couch, just because it was a circumstance recorded in the memory of the narrator, not in the least for any pictorial effect.

I insist on this point because it has a good deal of bearing on the question as to these prophecies of our Lord's death. St. Mark not only records all these prophecies with much minuteness, but records them with circumstances not noticed by the other evangelists. For instance, the assertion that Jesus spoke the saying as to

his own rejection by the elders, and execution, and resurrection, quite straightforwardly (παρρησίᾳ), that is, without any sort of symbolic language, is peculiar to St. Mark, as is the statement that the rebuke to Peter was *not* privately given, but given "when He had turned about and looked on the disciples." So again the statement on the same occasion, that He called the people to Him before declaring, "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me," is made as though St. Mark intended to draw special attention to the fact that the teaching as to Christ's own coming humiliation, and the humiliation of all his true disciples, was delivered with a careful purpose of publicity, and in striking contrast to his recent command to his disciples not to publish their own belief in his Messiahship. So again after the transfiguration, St. Mark, and St. Mark alone, records that when the three apostles were prohibited from speaking of what they had seen till after the Son of man had risen from the dead, "they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean." And in relation to the private journey of our Lord through Galilee, St. Mark records carefully that when our Lord repeated his words that "the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him; and after that He is killed, He shall rise the third day," "they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask Him," while St. Luke, repeating the statement as to the failure to understand and the fear to ask for explanations, applies it only to the sad part of the prediction, and omits altogether in this place the reference to the resurrection on the third day, to which, if I read the Gospel rightly, the failure to understand and fear to ask for explanations specially applied. And lastly, when our Lord goes up to Jerusalem for the last time, it is St. Mark alone who records that

something in his mien and gestures, as He went before them, amazed them, and made them afraid, before the teaching as to the fate in store for Him was once again reiterated carefully to their incredulous ears. If, then, we can trust St. Mark at all, it is clear that his account is founded on the observations of an eye-witness, and an eye-witness who had noted with careful and vivid distinctness all the occasions on which Jesus had predicted his death and resurrection to his apostles, and who was profoundly impressed with the fact both of the anxiety He had shewn in trying to prepare them in the most impressive manner for what was coming, and of their own inability to realize his meaning, and this moreover especially, as it would seem, as to the resurrection from the dead.

Of course the sceptical explanation of these features in the narrative—features, it must be remembered, characterizing especially and emphatically the narrative of the oldest, as is now thought, of the Gospels—is, that the Gospel never having been written, at all events in its present form, till after the destruction of Jerusalem, these accounts of our Lord's predictions were largely coloured by after-thoughts derived from the actual event, and made to account for the resurrection, which was then believed, though erroneously believed, to have followed it. But will this explanation hold water at all, unless indeed on the supposition now almost universally abandoned by sane critics, that the Gospel was a deliberate forgery, made for dogmatic purposes? For remember we have not only to account for predictions absolutely essential to the Gospel, such as those which I am now discussing, but for other predictions quite as marvellous, which are not in the least essential to it—the prediction of Judas's treachery, of Peter's denial, and of Christ's approaching burial, for which our Lord declared that the precious ointment at the feast of Bethany was a preparation. Where was the imaginative tempta-

tion to the Church of embodying in its history our Lord's anticipation of the treachery of one of his own chosen twelve, an anticipation which would seem to throw doubts on the wisdom of his own selection of the traitor? M. Havet, I observe, regards as completely unhistorical the whole story of Judas's treachery; and this is consistent in him. But how in the world should that have been invented by a writer, writing after the siege of Jerusalem? And why should a special prediction of it have been also invented, even if a false tradition had arisen as to the fact itself? The story reflected no obvious credit either on the Church or on the prescience of its Head, since it created the difficulty which has so often been suggested since, namely, that Jesus should have chosen for an apostle one whose treachery He foresaw. Again, where was the temptation to the infant Church of reading back into its history the prediction of Peter's cowardice, a prediction which seemed to render that cowardice at once so much less likely and so much less excusable? And to whom could it have occurred, years after the event, to say that our Lord spoke of the ointment with which He was anointed several days before the crucifixion as preparing Him "for his burial," if no such saying had really escaped Him? These wholly non-essential predictions of the smaller and more personal kind are just as marvellous, as predictions, as the predictions of the crucifixion, and resurrection, and the siege of Jerusalem. M. Havet's rejection of the institution of the sacrament of our Lord's body and blood is founded apparently on the conjecture that it was borrowed by the evangelists from St. Paul's special revelation, which he thinks unhistoric; but not only is this mere assumption, but it is very gratuitous assumption, seeing that St. Paul never suggests any one of the three minor predictions I have mentioned, while these at least are not at all predictions of a kind to be invented



after the minuter interests of the last days of the life of Jesus had merged in the greater interest of the destiny of the gospel itself. And yet all these predictions must be rejected by the anti-supernaturalist, and are so rejected, for the very reason that they are predictions, and therefore inconsistent with the obvious law of human ignorance.

What I want to press then is this, that in St. Mark's Gospel at least, we have a document which even the sceptics usually assume to have been written in good faith, a document moreover full of our Lord's foresight, foresight exerted now on smaller personal matters, now again on larger and more momentous interests affecting the very heart of his religion. But the supernatural foresight which the Gospel contains, so far from being exclusively of the kind that would chiefly interest the world forty years after our Lord's crucifixion, is concerned, in three cases at least, with personal matters touching the apostles and the woman who anointed Him at Bethany, matters which could hardly by any possibility, have been invented a generation after the event, and invented by a writer moreover who had never heard of the miraculous birth, and who left unrecorded the greater part of the story of the resurrection. These exercises of foresight are in no respects less remarkable or less exact than the greater prophecies of the crucifixion itself, the resurrection, and the destruction of Jerusalem, which, as is now assumed, were slowly elaborated in the imaginations of loving disciples who had brooded long and affectionately over the past, and now and then had, as they thought, obtained brilliant glimpses of a visionary present. If there is any reason to date the greater prophecies after the event, there is much more reason to date the lesser prophecies after the event also, for the record of them *could* not have been penned before it; but then in their case you must ascribe their invention to a time so close to the death of Jesus as to make of them definite forgeries,

and not merely slow growths of a traditional imagination. And this seems to me to apply also to St. Mark's accounts of our Lord's prophecies of his own death and resurrection, and the mode in which they were enforced on the disciples. These accounts are so precise, so full of minute touches, so evidently careful, that if they were invented after the event, they must have been intentional forgeries, not imaginatively coloured traditions. They all converge to one point—to shew that Jesus fully appreciated the extraordinary difficulty his disciples would find in accepting the belief in a suffering and crucified Messiah, and in the very unsensational because private resurrection which they witnessed, and did all in his power, by precept upon precept, by rebuke, by striking and emphatic gesture, by parable, and by a solemnly instituted public rite, to sow in their very hearts the truth of truths which He was anxious to plant there, a seed at once of humiliation and of hope.

Well, it may be said, but if this be admitted, how can we account for the singular ill-success of the endeavour? Can it be denied that as a matter of fact the apostles were plunged in despair? Does not St. Luke himself tell us that when the women of the company announced the resurrection of the Lord, “their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not”? To this I reply first, that, though the apostles undoubtedly were thrown into a state of bewilderment, not to say despair, we may very well exaggerate that despair, for we have no minute account of their state of mind. The same authority who describes them as receiving the news of the resurrection with unbelief as an idle tale, goes on to say that Peter at once ran to the sepulchre, which was not the act of blank unbelief. And at all events, this is clear, that our Lord's teaching concerning his death and resurrection was not so unfruitful of warning as his personal prophecies of the treachery of Judas and the denial of Peter, neither of which prevented

the subject of it from fulfilling the prediction uttered half as warning, half as prophecy. But is it really reasonable to suppose that all our Lord could do to prepare his disciples for what they were to expect, would have been sufficient to steel them against the shock of the crucifixion? A body of helpless and ignorant men, without apparently one man of genius, or one man of commanding power among them, seeing the popular feeling alienated, their master dead and buried, and the universal conviction that all was over, must have had an overflowing stock of faith indeed if they had felt no despondency, no revulsion of feeling, no suspicion that they had been living in dream-land all this time, and that now at last they were awaking to the dreary truth. St. Luke's description of the actual state of feeling as expressed by the disciples on the way to Emmaus is very much I think what we ought to have expected as the result of Christ's predictions, and that state of feeling is not described as really hopeless: "But we trusted that it had been He which should have delivered Israel, and beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that He was alive; and certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said; but Him they saw not." It seems to me that the clearest prediction can do very little to weaken the shock of reality on a mind not yet prepared for that reality by its own intellectual and moral growth. Prediction did not make Peter feel less keenly the shame and shrinking of belonging to one who was for the moment the subject of universal mockery, and this though he had but a few minutes before, in a very different moral atmosphere, professed, and truly professed, that it would

be easier for him to go to prison and to death with Jesus, than to deny Him. And so, too, when every one and everything seemed to bear witness that the influence of Jesus was at an end, it was not wonderful that the power of a few prophecies, even though partly fulfilled, was insufficient to nerve the apostles' hearts to unflinching trust.

But what to me does seem really and absolutely incredible is the sceptical assumption that, this being the moral situation, yet in that situation, and without any event which could reasonably restore the confidence of the apostles in their Master, without any man of genius among them at all resembling the Apostle of the Gentiles, who was still numbered amongst their worst enemies, they should have recovered their confidence, begun for themselves, without Jesus, a new and more hopeful career than any they had struck out with Him, persuaded themselves of a resurrection which had not only never occurred but never even been foreshadowed, and contrived to communicate their belief to a rapidly growing number of believers who found not only comfort but power, not only faith but life and joy in the very community which had but yesterday been utterly prostrated by the disappearance of its Lord and by the sudden paralysis of its most passionate hopes.

R. H. HUTTON.

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